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**No.1
FOR DIGITAL
ARTISTS**

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**BEHIND THE SCENES
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**Artist
Q&A**
BEGINNER'S GUIDE
TO PAINTING FUR,
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MORE!



PHOTOSHOP! ANNA DITTMANN REVEALS HER HAUNTING PORTRAIT PROCESS



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Welcome... to the jungle!



One of the best things about editing this magazine is the number of talented artists that I find and work with. One such artist I've admired for a long time – and who has been a part of ImagineFX since the beginning – is Bobby Chiu. His 'big bad bunny eater' workshop image from issue

nine is still one of my favourites. I only had Bobby in mind when I decided to do an issue about creatures, and it was a pleasure to finally get to work with him on an ImagineFX cover. He's an inspiration to many and I hope you find his workshop on page 74 insightful.

For all your other creature needs great and small, there's an inspired beginner's Q&A critter special, a brilliant interview with Terryl Whitlatch – the creator of Star Wars: Episode 1's Jar Jar Binks and other aliens – on page 48, a step-by-step guide to bringing 2D creatures to life in 3D on page 84 and an astonishingly good painting (and workshop!) from Matt Stawicki on page 78, in which he creates a muscular fantasy steed.

One goal of ImagineFX is to discover great new talent, and someone whose art recently caught my eye on deviantART was Anna Dittmann, so I got in touch to ask if she could share her portrait secrets with us. You can read her workshop on page 88. She's only 17! Can you believe that? If you think that you, too, should feature in ImagineFX, don't wait for me to find you – please drop me an email with details of your work. On that note, there's still time (just!) to enter our Rising Stars search. See page 36 for more details. Maybe you'll be the next Bobby Chiu!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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Featured artists

ImagineFX brings together some of the world's finest artists to share their techniques and inspiration for creating stunning artwork



Terryl Whitlatch



After switching from zoology to art at university, Terryl found a unique role

creating accurate animal art, before transferring her skills again to designs for the Lucasarts game The Dig. She then worked on Star Wars Episode I, where she designed most of the film's wildlife, including the infamous Jar Jar Binks. Find out more about her creature design work on page 48.

creativetalentnetwork.com



Glen Southern



A traditional sculptor for many years, Glen now works digitally to create unique creatures and

characters for film, TV and video games at his studio, SouthernGFX. In this, issue Glen combines his traditional and digital skills in order to demonstrate how to take your 2D creature and character designs into 3D, using the budget software Silo. Read Glen's workshop on page 84 to pick up some vital tips.

southerngfx.co.uk



Paul Gerrard



The Liverpoolian artist recently shot to fame as the artistic inspiration behind

the quirky aliens in invasion movie Battle: Los Angeles. A traditional painter who turned digital when he entered the video games industry, Paul's unique style recalls HR Giger and Francis Bacon. His art mixes nature, flesh and mechanical designs in dreamlike scenes. See his work on page 60.

gerrardart.com



Anna Dittmann



Even though Anna is just graduating from school this year, the 17-year-old artist has

garnered attention for her beautifully dark and mysterious portraits. This issue, she sheds a little light on her process in a workshop aimed at revealing how to produce evocative fantasy portraits in Photoshop. See how Anna's experimental risks reap some fantastic rewards on page 88.

escume.deviantart.com



Matthew Stawicki



Inspired by legends such as Frank Frazetta, Matthew Stawicki is fast becoming

an artist to be revered in his own right. With a client list that includes leading book publishers Harper/Collins and Penguin, and fantasy giant Wizards of the Coast, his work brings traditional craft to the digital medium. Matthew's workshop on how to paint a fantasy horse is on page 78.

mattstawicki.com



Mike McCain



Seattle-based Mike works for Moonshot Games as a concept artist, creating art for the studio's

first game, Fallen Frontier. On page 94, Mike turns his attention to the tricky subject of finding a new aesthetic in the sci-fi genre. Mike paints an epic space scene, looking at ways to improve your workflow by developing clear goals, while also exploring ways in which you can ensure that your scene feels fresh.

mikebot.net





ImagineFX Cover artist

One of the world's most sought-after creature artists, Bobby Chiu, takes time out of his schedule to create this issue's cover and lead workshop...



Bobby Chiu

COUNTRY: Canada

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

WEB: imaginismstudios.com

Bobby began his art career designing officially licensed toys for Disney and Pixar at the age of 17. Bobby now owns his own company, Imaginism Studios, from which he freelances for the book and film industries – his last project was on Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*. Bobby also finds time to teach via his online courses at Schoolism.



Bobby sent over a series of sketches and WIPs of his ideas for our creature-themed cover image. We loved the idea of a cuddly creature snaring smaller prey in its colourful, yummy looking headwear. With this idea finalised, we set Bobby to work on developing the concept...



The first colour version is completed and we're happy, but feel the colours need to be punchier for a cover. Too much grey and green diminishes the design, but it does highlight the colourful antlers. Bobby works on pushing the colours and developing the creature's features.



The final image hits all the right notes. The colours are deeper and richer, but don't overshadow the colourful antler-trap on our furry predator's head. Likewise, the background is warmer and the new pose means that we see the critter's fluffy tale.



ImagineFX

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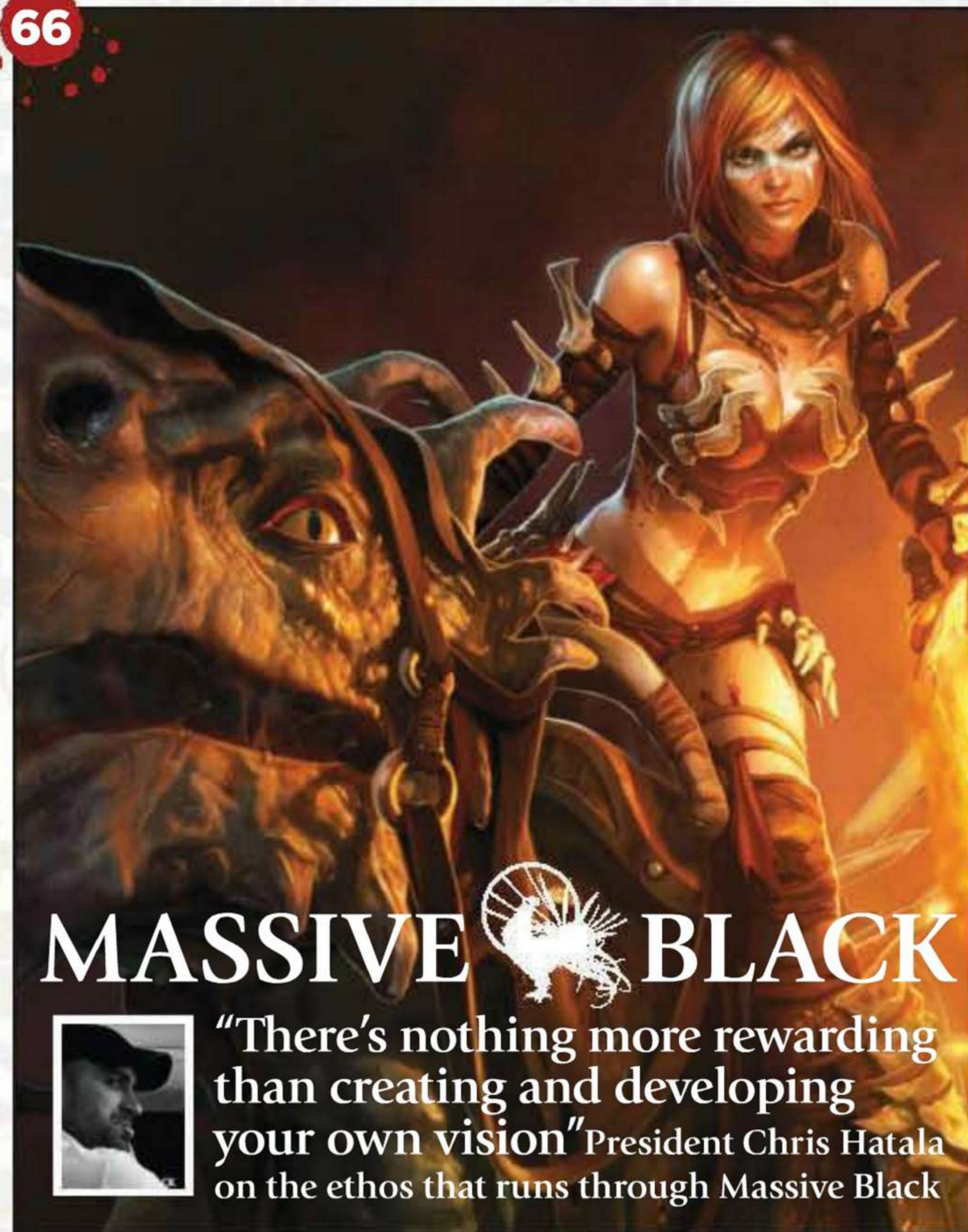
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"There's nothing more rewarding than creating and developing your own vision" President Chris Hatala on the ethos that runs through Massive Black

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



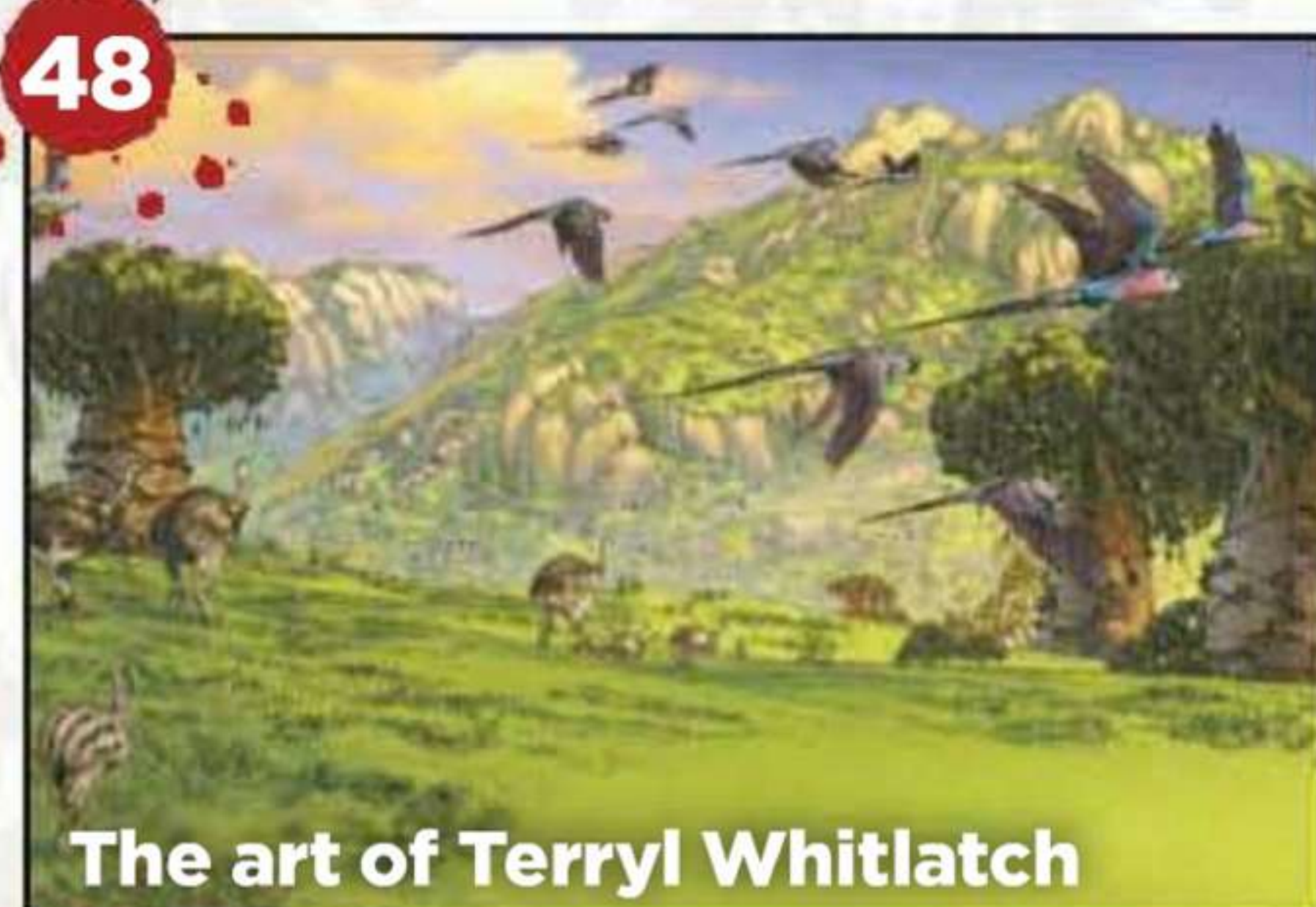
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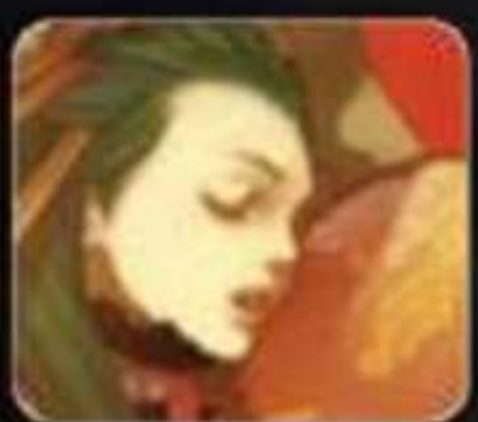
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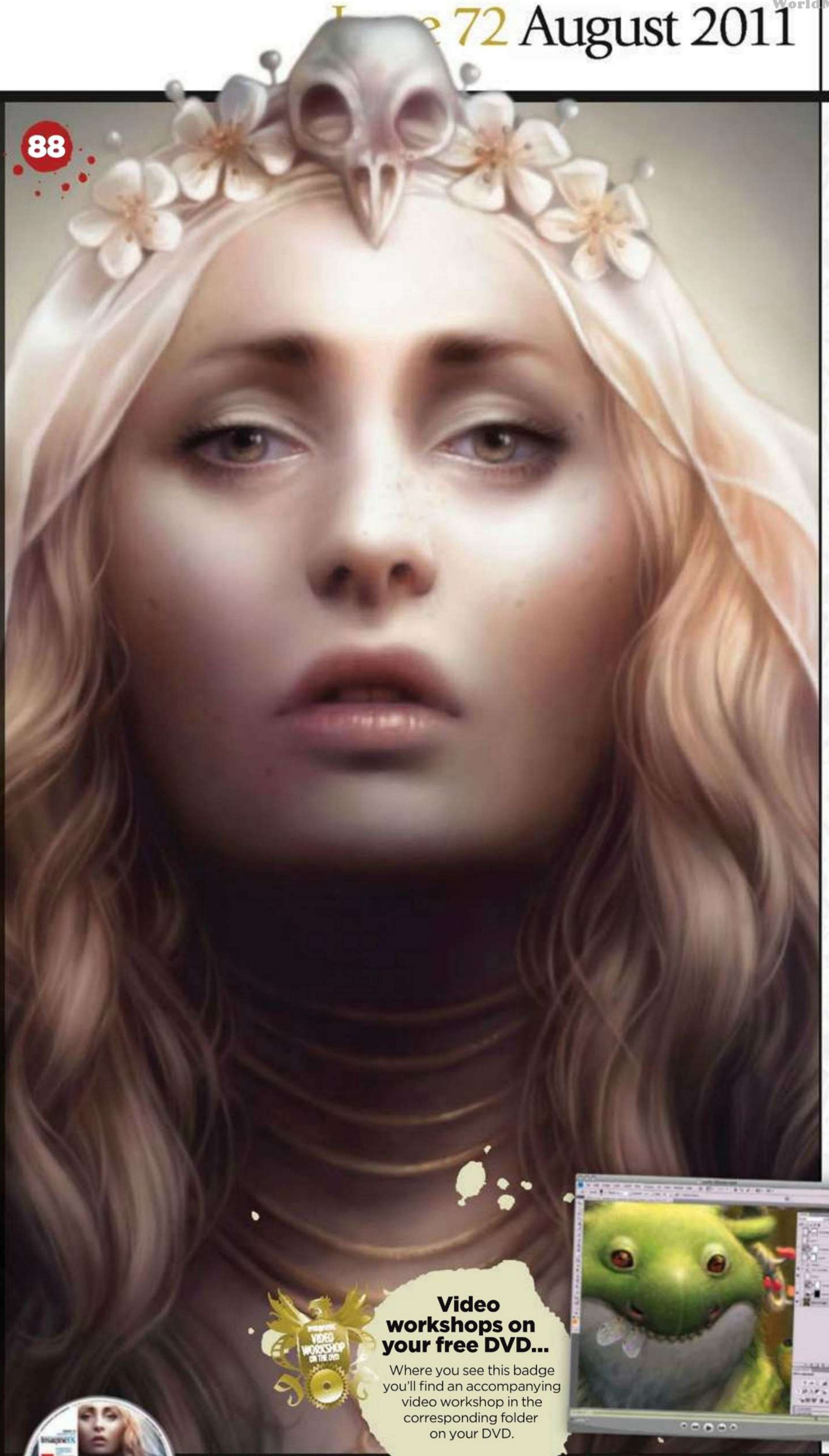
Artist Q&A

40 This month's Q&A topics...

Paint a snarling, drooling werewolf, a mutated bear paw, rabid rats, alien skin with ZBrush, translucent webbed hands, feathers, fur and lots more!



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Video workshops on your free DVD...

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you'll find an accompanying
video workshop in the
corresponding folder
on your DVD.



Turn to page 114 for more...

ON YOUR DVD

This month's essential art resources...

160 animal reference images

Everything from bats to rhinos.

40 fur and scale textures

Inject realism into your creature art.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



David Kegg

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"Illustration is my way of storytelling," says David, "because I can give life and context to characters, places and events."

David's illustration and writing is heavily influenced by fantasy and sci-fi. "I'm drawn to these genres because they often deal with themes of the supernatural, the mystical and the spiritual, and this is something that links with art's conventions of allegory, symbolism and iconography."

1 FALL OF THE REPHIAM "This image was done for a role-playing game world setting I created, called Prophecy. In this 'psy-punk' world setting, an ancient race of psychic machines known as the Rephiam have resurfaced and are wandering the outskirts of civilisation. When a Rephiam creature ventures too close to a human settlement, two members of a order of warrior-priests known as the House of Elyon, Eleazar and Basshebeth, must bring down the beast before the town is destroyed."

2 SMOKE AND BONES "This piece was inspired by a short story I've been writing called Smoke and Bones. This image depicts the main hero. He's a refugee caught between technology and mysticism, between a thriving industrial superpower and the forbidden rituals of his past – the ability to speak with the dead."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations David – you've won a copy of Exotique 6 and Character Modeling 3! To find out more about these two indispensable art resources, go to ballisticpublishing.com.



Artist crit

Serge Birault gives his positive assessment of David's cover art for the book he's busy writing



"Even though there are lots of elements in this picture, overall the composition works well. I especially like the face of the girl, which is lovely and fits nicely into the background."

2

Reader
FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



1



Felicia Smith

LOCATION: Canada

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EMAIL: Felicia.Smith@live.ca

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"My biggest passion is painting digitally," says Felicia, and it was love at first sight. Having discovered digital while

browsing through a book featuring concept art done in Photoshop, she scoured the internet for workshops to learn about her new chosen medium.

"Although I'm still learning, I've come to love the style, precision and flexibility that digital media offers," she says.

"Now every scrap of my free time is spent scribbling down ideas and doodles, because I hope to pursue a career in concept art or illustration."

1 I'M SORRY "I'm a bit of a sci-fi dork and a huge fan of Doctor Who. This is my tribute to the tenth Doctor as portrayed by David Tennant."

2 TANGLED UP "This is an attempted self-portrait I did using a mirror. The title stems from the fact that I tend to get caught up in my art projects."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Felicia's pensive self-portrait works well with its

restricted palette and subtle details on the wallpaper. And the paisley pattern coming off the pen is a great idea."

Beren Neale,
Staff Writer

2



1



Christoffer Bjors

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



For Christoffer, drawing is as natural as breathing, but the real joy comes from what he expresses in his art. "I'm all about mystery and life experience," he says. "My goal is to travel and experience life in as many ways possible, with the help of my art."

Art is integral in Christoffer's life experience. "I'm always looking to grow as a person, and I believe that the world will smile on you if you work really hard for it and don't complain."

1 WHO IS LIKE GOD? "This was a commission for a friend. It took me over 20 hours to complete, during which I felt my art skills noticeably improved. The title is the meaning of the name of the woman featured."

2 GOTTA HAVE A HOOK "Fantasy is also one of my favourite things to draw. This painting was my entry for a public challenge at The Art Order. It depicts a dwarf from the Dungeons & Dragons universe battling a creature called a Hook Horror."

2



+ Melanie Furlenmeier

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



When Melanie left school in Switzerland, being an artist wasn't high on her radar.

"I didn't have a plan to become anything, for that matter," she says. So after school she started working in a "normal boring job" - and immediately got frustrated.

A few months later she started classes in art school and she hasn't looked back. "I'm more than happy to have chosen this path."

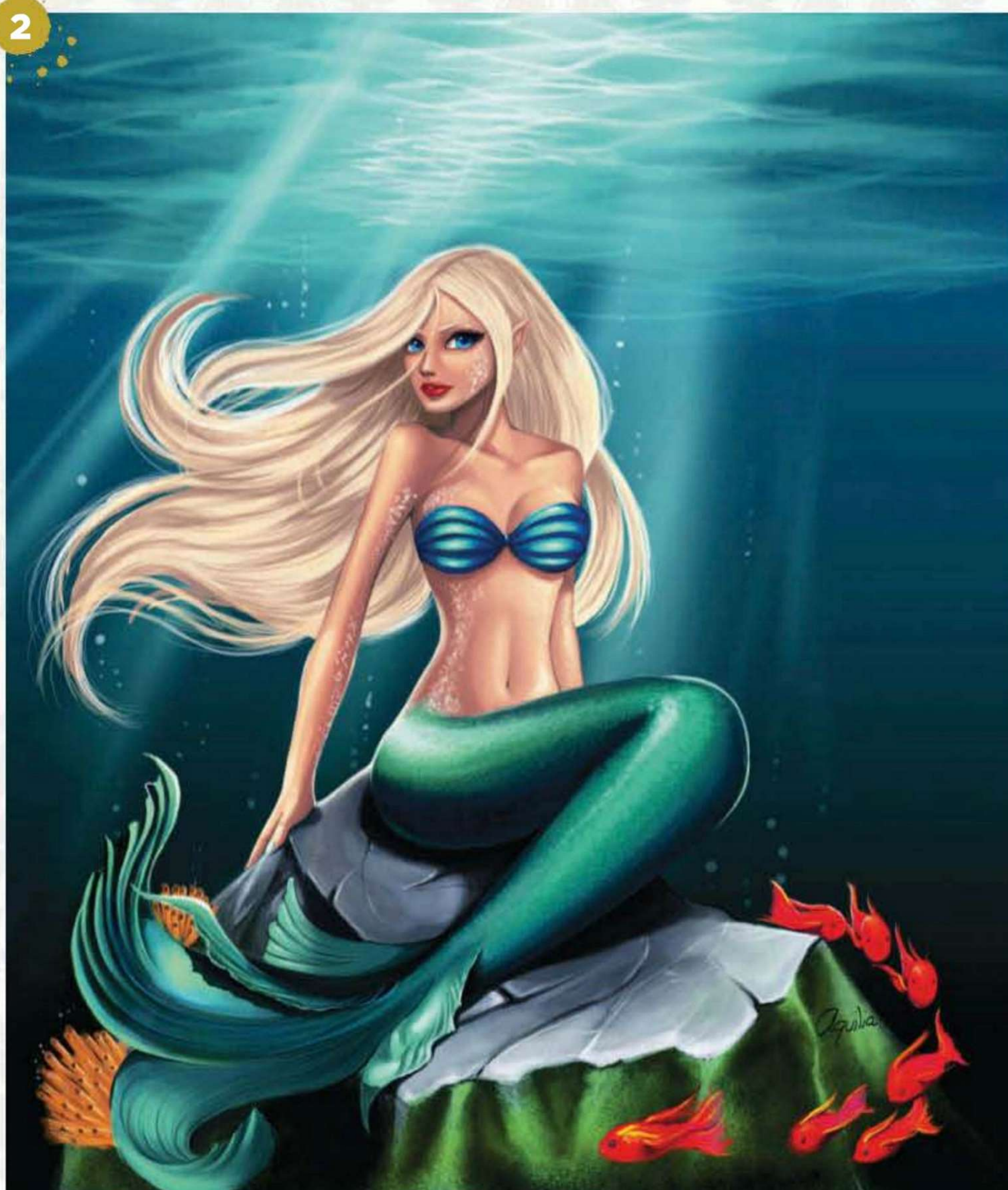


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"The shafts of light penetrating the sea really sell the underwater setting. There's a bit of clever composition going on here too, with the mermaid's gaze and the position of her tail mirroring the path of the brightly coloured fish."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor



1 ETERNAL COMPANION "This image was created for a contest on deviantART. Because I kept changing the details it took forever to finish and my submission never even got evaluated. I did enjoy making it nevertheless - it was my first time drawing a dragon."

2 MERMAID OF THE OCEAN "There's a funny story to this one. I initially wanted to paint a witch for Halloween and you can still see how the shape of her tail used to be legs, riding a broom. I didn't finish it in time, so a few modifications later and behold - a mermaid!"

Janette Soriano Ramos

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



At the age of 16 Janette wandered into the deviantART galleries of Linda Bergkvist and Marta Dahlig. "They inspired me so much that I decided to try digital art myself," she says. "I wasn't so good at it. I tried to draw with a mouse, until my wrist began to hurt." The next step was to save up for a Wacom tablet...

Now at the age of 19 and fresh out of college, Janette is looking for a good starting job in the digital art industry. "My dream is to become a concept artist for video games and film. Still a long way to go, but if I work hard and stay inspired, maybe I'll get there someday."

1 ORITHYIA "Orithyia is the Greek goddess of cold mountain winds. I'm interested in mythology because there can be so many visual interpretations of one subject, and the idea of painting a wind goddess was a good challenge for me."

2 BITTER EMA "This was inspired by a friend of mine who was recovering from a break-up. She was sad, confused, bitter and angry all at the same time. I made a macabre depiction of her mood and I gave it to her. It made her smile."

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Orithyia is a great piece – a suspended ephemeral wind goddess. Jannette's imagination shines through, making this ancient character seem as fresh as the wind around her."

Ian Dean
Deputy Editor

Luca Cauchi

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Luca has a daily target he strives to achieve: "I try and get better and improve my skill in art each day - that's all I think about!"

A self-taught artist, Luca has always been fascinated with films and game art, and when he figured out how these paintings were done, he delved head first into the world of digital painting. "Don't get my wrong," he says, "I love oil paintings, but with digital I feel I can be more versatile."

1 PRAYER IN CAIRO "This is a personal study from the old master Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting Prayer In Cairo. While working on it I decided to give it a sci-fi and fantasy twist. The position of the man inspired me to paint something big going on in the background. I also added some spirit/energy coming out from the carpet, which is a result of continuous praying."

2 VIKINGS ON CHARGE "This painting was inspired by one of my most influential and favourite artists out there - Kekai Kotaki. I wanted to show Viking charging into battle. I enjoyed working on this one, even though it was a challenge. Warriors are really interesting to paint, and I enjoy doing them."



Yangtian Li

LOCATION: Melbourne, Australia

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Having completed a degree in animation last December, Yangtian has just entered the games industry and is working as the lead artist for an iPhone game developer in Melbourne, Australia.

"I've always dreamed of becoming an artist," she says. "Although I always knew this would ultimately take me to animation, my short-term goal is to focus on becoming a better illustrator and concept artist."

1 BLACK ROSE "That which spikes hurts the most. That's the message I hope to bring to the audience by this painting. She thought about defending herself with the thorns, and to attack people in order to protect her own. But the spikes hurt her much more in the process."

2 HERA "Here's my take on the Greek goddess. She's furious at those who aren't loyal and she's about to punish them. Her weapon is a whip of fire, representing her anger and jealousy."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Ouch! You can feel that scratched, punctured skin, and the heat coming off the flaming serpent spirits. Yangtian does a great job to get colour to fit mood, and there's attitude to spare for each of her characters. Top stuff!"

Beren Neale,
Staff Writer

2



Brad Wright

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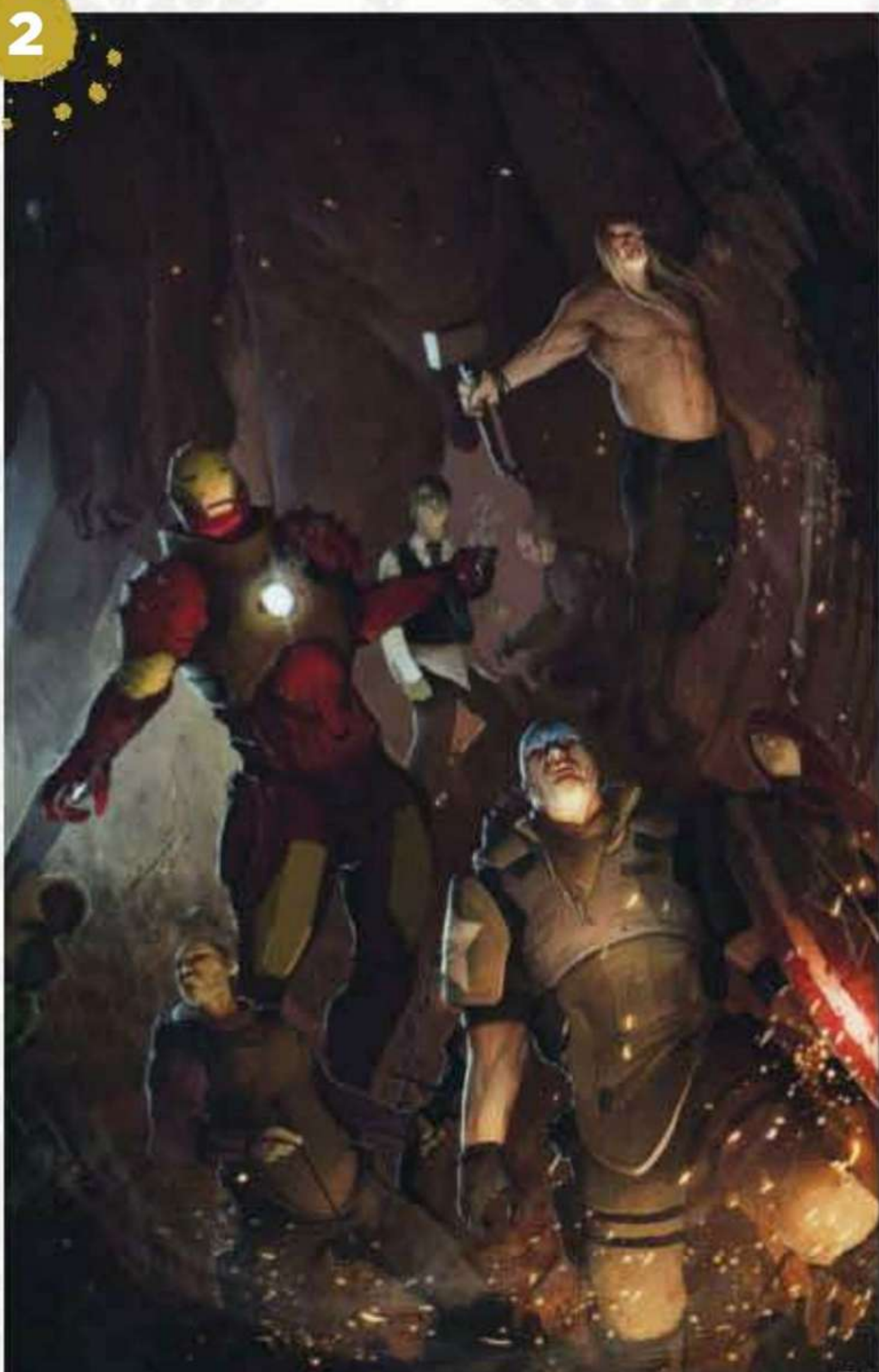
"I'm self-taught and very uneducated," says the self-deprecating Brad, "but I've always had a love for creating worlds and everything those worlds could contain."

In fact, Brad has been working for the past few years as a concept artist on various games. "And when I get some free time, I like to work on my comic book. Storytelling is my true passion."

The comic Brad's working on features his love of Westerns. "It's a rich, deep and dark story that I look forward to spending many years delving into."

1 THE MAGPIE "This is a little superhero comic idea I've been exploring is, called None for Sorrow. The main character is The Magpie, a psychotic, disturbed, vicious, dirty cop killer. This image shows the aftermath of a kick-ass fight scene. He may not be the most accomplished fighter, but he has determination on his side. I painted it during some free evenings after work."

2 THE ULTIMATES "A couple of years ago I read Marvel's The Ultimates and was completely sucked into it, thanks in no small part to the brilliant art of Bryan Hitch. Recently, I decided to redesign the Ultimates, with the aim of painting an awesome superhero team. This image started off as a doodle on a Post-it note."



1



+ Toby Lewin

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Maya



With four years studying design and multimedia at university, Toby had the chance to "dabble with a broad range of tools in 2D, 3D, graphic design and animation." In fact, it's only been recently that he's got into concept art - as soon as he got superfast broadband to be exact. "Then all of a sudden there was an explosion of imagination and awesomeness from the whole world with a few clicks of my mouse."

2



© Wandering Men Studios

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Strong ideas and execution! Each image is based on a clear concept and then taken to completion with flair. I love the idea of the warrior confronting a dragon hidden in a snow storm. There's a calmness rendered here that makes the image engaging."

Ian Dean,
Deputy Editor

1 FLIGHT OF THE DYING SWIFTWINGS

"The swiftwings are fleeing from giant alien terraforming devices that have come to mine their mineral rich planet. They use their powerful limbs to gather speed and leap in to the air. This was created for the Creature Planets activity over on CGHub."

2 THE RENEWER "This creature is the very embodiment of spring. Flowers bloom in its footsteps, ice melts wherever it steps and it breathes out fertile spores. This was a great brief, commissioned by Wandering Men Studios for the Untold trading card game."

3 THE WIND IS AGAINST YOU "This wandering hero is about to unleash hell upon the dragon in the blizzard and he has the wind in his favour. I started this image with the aim of rendering really intense weather effects. Throw in an angry dragon and a bad-ass with swords and you have a recipe for awesomeness!"

3



Aaron Minier

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Currently living in America's Midwest, Aaron's fairly new to the professional comics industry. "My first

professional gig was illustrating the graphic novel Battle of Destiny, written by Chuck Dixon," he says, "and I've also worked with the late Wildstorm Productions on the title PUSH."

Most recently Aaron has been drawing his own collaborative graphic novel project, Black Rose. Aaron also contributed to issue #3 of Tales From The Fringe, a comic book miniseries that accompanies the popular television show Fringe. "I'd say that my biggest ambition is to engage viewers in the same way I've been engaged with comics," he says, "leaving them feeling that they've had a good experience."

1 DANGEROUS BEAUTIES "This is a fan art piece of She-Ra and Red Sonja teamed up to dish out some serious pain. I grin every time I see She-Ra's fist clenching the severed head of Hordak. I used a lot of bright colours because that's how I recall the She-Ra universe and toys - bright, sparkly and happy. I find the juxtaposition with the subject matter amusing."

2 HELL'S GATE "This is the cover of the first issue for my creator-owned comic book Black Rose, a dark fantasy/western tale. This piece was pencilled and inked traditionally, before being coloured in Photoshop."

3 THE ARRIVAL "This is the cover of Black Rose issue two. The story of Black Rose blends technology and traditional fantasy elements together and I wanted this cover to have a strong steampunk feel to it."



She Ra © Filimation Associates & Mattel, Inc. Red Sonja © Dynamite Entertainment.

2



© 2010 Christopher Arndt, Aaron Minier and Brandon Peat.

3



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Great line art and a studied pulp style ensure Aaron's illustrations capture my attention as much as my imagination! His Black Rose comic is a brave blend of genres, but he's pulled it off with style."
Claire Howlett,
Editor

SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them.
fxpose@imaginefx.com

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:
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30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW
UK

School's out... but what now?

Art advice It's graduation time, and with a new crop of mustard-keen art students released into the world, advice on their next step is abundant – at least, it should be...

In a recent post on the brilliant Muddy Colors art blog, art veteran **Chris Moeller** argues that there's a woeful lack of support for post-graduates. He laments the lack of standard practice in preparation for the realities of getting that coveted first job in the art world – an industry with a cut-throat reputation.



"The post-grad experience is something I've never seen addressed directly," says Chris. Each graduate may be a finely tuned, deadline-killing machine, but facing life without a school structure and the support of classmates can be daunting. "They're just expected to 'break

Donato advocates a far-sighted attitude to the business when faced with distracting factors.



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL...

...but there are some very big names attached to this unique sci-fi- and fantasy-themed art gallery on the East Coast of the US of A.
Page 23



HAWAIIAN HIDEOUT

Concept artist Raymond Swanland shows us round his studio, on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, where he produces his intense fantasy imagery.
Page 24



COMIC CREATOR

An exciting new book from Bengal casts fresh light on the prolific French artist, best known for the sexual playfulness and über cuteness of his work.
Page 27



into the business', which can seem scary and mysterious. It's the hardest phase of any artist's career and, paradoxically, it often gets overlooked by professors."

A good first step is to get some realistic expectations, and for Chris that means accepting the Five Year Plan. "After I graduated, the successful illustrator Richard

Williams cautioned me that it could take a long time to break into the business," he recalls. "I nodded and thought, 'maybe for you, old man'. Five years later, literally, I got my first graphic novel commission, and my career took off."

This perspective will help you to retain a yogi-like calm as graduate friends start raking in the money. But then, they didn't



choose this glorious profession, that's as competitive as it is rewarding. "The game has changed drastically from when I began illustrating," says Donato Giancola, "with talent across the globe competing for a handful of commissions."

Struggle may be as guaranteed as death and taxes, says Donato, but you should find solace in the fact that the path you

Francis Vallejo teaches that studying art history and different media, digital and traditional, may lead to a unique artistic voice.

You may be creating art like Chris, below, but you should still prepare yourself for a lengthy period before the jobs start rolling in.



Solitary life: it's a good idea to prepare for a life away from the structures of school, says Chris.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

FRANCIS VALLEJO

The Art Department lecturer tells graduates like it is

What information would have helped you when starting out?

Art is a very romantic, passion-driven field. Especially at school, there's a fire to produce sweeping, world-changing pictures. It's also about having a good business head. Never lose that fire, but work on a balance of lucrative projects, and on personal projects in your own time. Pay the bills first. I learned the hard way that it's difficult to paint on an empty stomach.

Do you see students unprepared for their chosen career?

Definitely. After graduation, too many students take time off. No way! It's time to step up your game and really start to crank. The world of freelance is unpredictable and many times five jobs will be presented to you, but only one is actually green-lit. Be relentless.

What should students know before looking for that first job?

Forget your level of representation or stylisation; the ability to draw and communicate your ideas are key. Always look for chances to step up your drawing game. Surround yourself with artists who inspire you, and a close network who support your efforts – avoid negativity. Study art history, the lives of your heroes, and different media and techniques in an effort to find your unique voice. Then you can create work only you can make, and only you will be hired to do it. This usually involves embracing your obsessions and eccentricities. Try gaining some experience with traditional media too. Success doesn't happen overnight. But if you move forward one small job and one newly gained fan at a time, you'll eventually pick up speed.



Francis is a lecturer for The Art Department. He's featured in the Spectrum art annual and had several exhibitions.

francisvallejo.com

Continued from previous page...



Keeping a cool head: Francis's top tip for graduates is to get stuck in.

create will never be duplicated. "Artists must seek their individual path to success," explains the artist. For Donato, this included losing detailed sight in one of his eyes just two weeks before moving to New York to start his career. "All these kind of events contributed to the drive and insights I developed to become a successful creative individual."

As an art lecturer, Francis Vallejo believes that the quicker students get accustomed to the grittier side of being an artist, the better – and this shouldn't be left until after graduation. "Students in their comfortable academic bubble should really be encouraged to field-test different types of painting skills and marketing strategies before they graduate... They should throw themselves to the wolves and make the inevitable mistakes early on."

For Chris, once you've accepted you're in it for the long slog, success will come down to a few essential practicalities. "Minimise obligations, maximise opportunities," he says. This can involve getting a part-time job that's in some way career-related, and avoiding game-changing financial commitments. "A career in the arts demands flexibility, persistence and self-motivation," he states, "but then those are the skills that any accomplished art graduate has already proven that they have."

To see all of Chris's original post, visit muddycolors.blogspot.com.



As well as 80-odd issues of Walking Dead, Charlie Adlard has also worked on Diary of the Dead, below.



The Walking Dead

Source material We speak to Walking Dead comic artist Charlie Adlard about why characters take precedence over zombies



A second series of the TV adaptation of The Walking Dead is set for release later this year. However, Charlie Adlard is still a little bewildered by the comic, and the TV show's, success. "I can tell you why it's a good comic," he tells us, "but its popularity is a complete mystery to me."

The reason that it's a good comic, he explains, is that it puts the characters before the horror. "The horror's there, and it wouldn't work without it, but I wouldn't have drawn 80-odd issues if I couldn't empathise with the characters."

Swiftly approaching work on issue 87 – his 80th – Charlie had a sense that the TV series would work as soon as he heard series creator Frank Darabont was a fan of the comic, first, and interested in a commercial product, second.

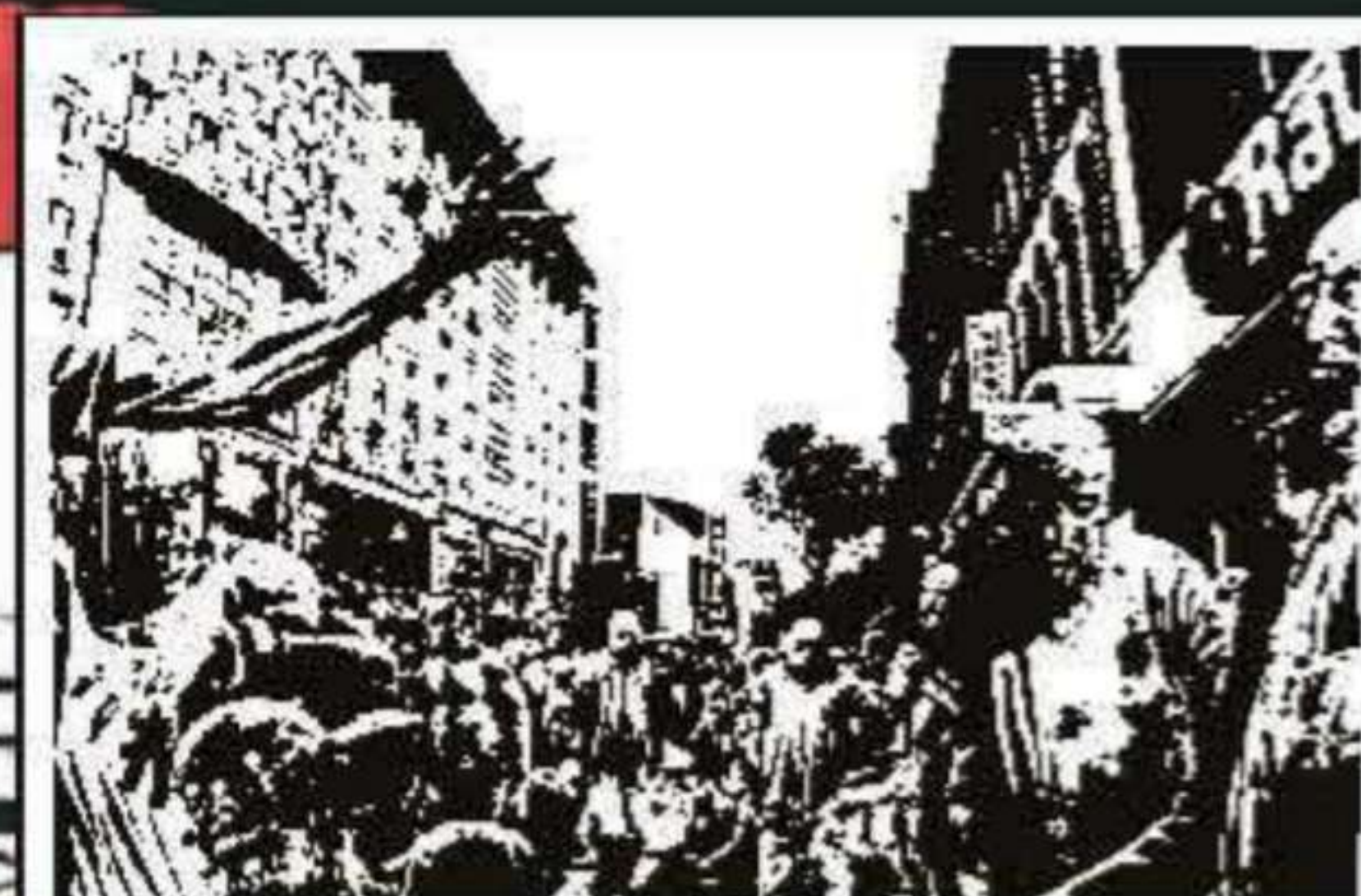
Luckily for Charlie, he's not precious about other interpretations of his work. "I'm really aware that although comics and TV shows are inextricably linked in certain ways, they are two different media," he says, "so I'm not sitting there seething if it deviates from the comic."

With The Walking Dead keeping him busy, Charlie's also been able to squeeze in a few other titles, including his first French title, Breath of the Wendigo. "As a massive fan of the European scene, it was really exciting to do," he tells us.

See more of his art at charlieadlard.com.



For Charlie, the comic's success has more to do with the characters than the walking dead.



The artist was pleased to see that the TV show's undead were inspired directly by his zombies.

It's the little things that count...

Gallery art Small is beautiful, with big names attached, in this unique sci-fi and fantasy-themed art gallery from the US's East Coast

Since May 2005 Irene Gallo and Greg Manchess have been asking their friends to create exclusive pieces of sci-fi and fantasy-themed art, then displaying them at their MicroVisions gallery. Each piece is just 5x7 inches, and after being displayed is auctioned online, with all profits going to the Society of Illustrators Student Scholarship Fund.



All of which seems perfectly normal, until you realise who their friends are. With a roster of artists that includes Michael Wheelan, Bill Carman, Jon Foster, Donato Giancola, Michael Kaluta, Boris Vallejo and many, many more, it's not surprising this little enterprise has steadily gained a sizable following.

"It was all inspired by a miniature by Jon Foster," says Greg, "that he showed Irene and I after a convention. A bunch of us were at dinner in New York sometime after the con, and the subject came up about doing a show of all miniature paintings with a science fiction and fantasy theme."

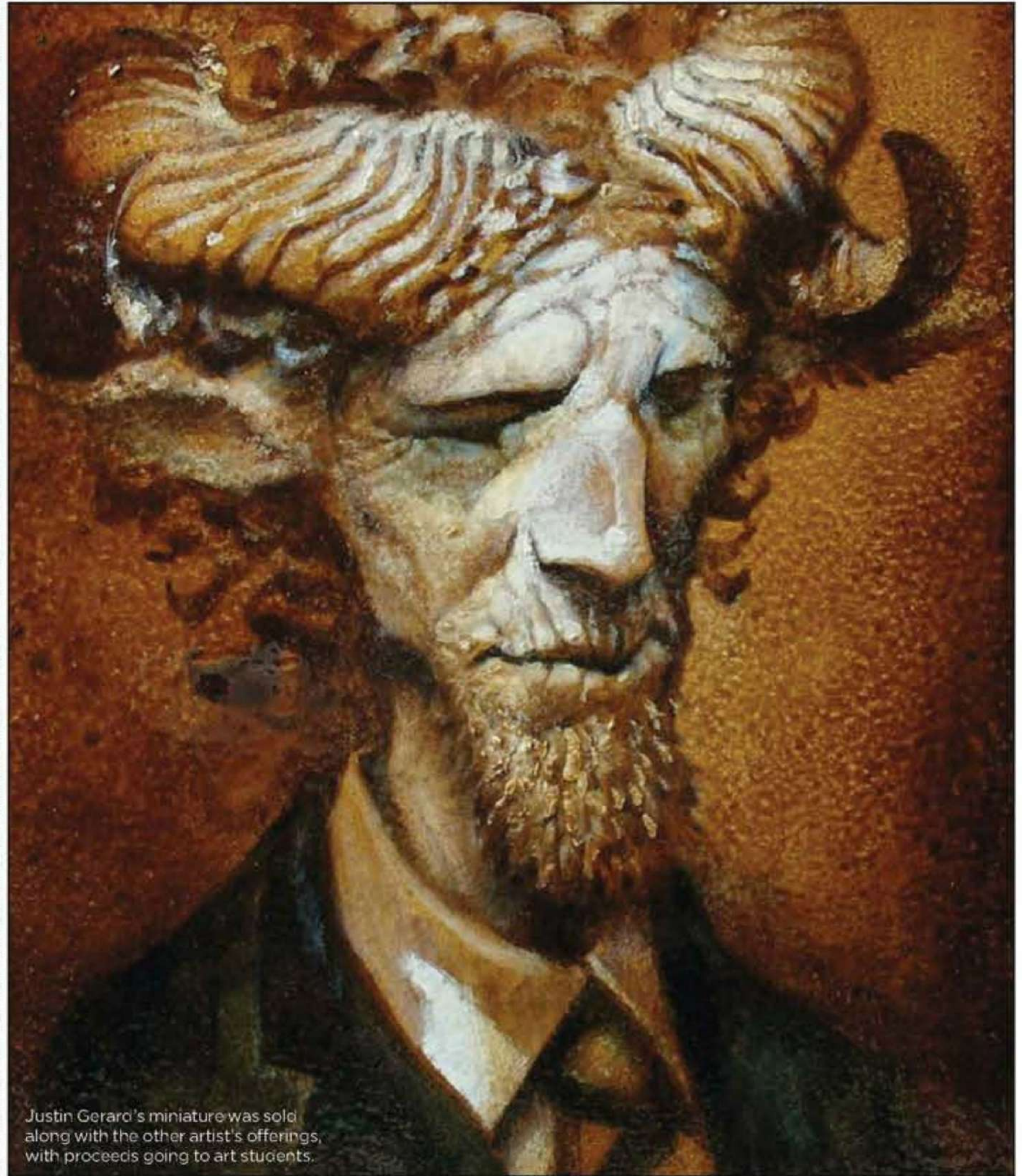


It was decided that they could be "quick little pieces" that could be sold for reasonable prices – a maddeningly modest statement when you look at the rich detail in every one.

In addition to the art provided for free by these master artists, MicroVisions also runs a student competition for artists starting out. "This year there were more than 7,000 entries," says Greg. "Out of that, about 200 were chosen for the exhibit in the gallery, with several winners receiving scholarship funds from the profits of MicroVisions."

See more of the entries here: bit.ly/lruG1M

Below, Boris Vallejo, Sam Weber, Bill Carman, Allen Williams, and Eric Fortune's offerings for the MicroVisions gallery.



Justin Gerard's miniature was sold along with the other artist's offerings, with proceeds going to art students.



Since 2005 MicroVisions has been running as a gallery and auction house.





+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Yue Wang

sakimichan.deviantart.com

There's some fabulous, action-packed imagery here if you want it, but we really like Sakimi's measured, intimate portraiture most of all. There's so much character in her paintings, and her depiction of clothing and props is amazingly assured. There's a huge rise in skill throughout her dA gallery.



Amanda Sage

asage.deviantart.com

On deviantART you're bound to bump into art you'd otherwise never encounter. Amanda Sage's images are positively glowing with her own spiritualism, which makes for some fascinating paintings and colourful accompanying prose. Art brimming with colour, optimism and a touch of the surreal.



Ryohei Hase

ryohei-hase.deviantart.com

Everyone loves erotically charged anthropomorphic visions of bedlam, right? Few can juggle such tricky elements and produce powerful imagery. There are humans. And animals. There's often a fine line between sex and violence, but it's all good when there's this much skill involved.

Photographic inspiration for a ghost story I'm writing. Shhh, don't tell anyone...



I use a Wacom Cintiq tablet connected to my laptop to work on sketches or detailing from the comfort of the couch.



Raymond Swanland

Mood swings He can produce dynamic, intense fantasy imagery, but the concept artist likes exploring uncluttered 'headspace'



From the floor of my childhood bedroom strewn with incomplete projects, to a company office plastered with references

and ongoing works on every wall, my work environment has evolved through some seriously varied conditions - like mood swings in my whole creative process.

A few years ago, my latest swing brought me to the Hawaiian island of Oahu, in search of a laid-back vibe to balance the intensity of spending too much time in my imagination. Hawaii's natural beauty has pried me out of my work-induced isolation and kept the creative batteries refreshed.

Finding the studio itself turned out to be a stroke of luck. I came across part of a house that an architect had designed as his own home studio, complete with abundant natural light (for the days before cyborg artists like me went all digital and nocturnal, I guess), high ceilings, built-in files and blueprint drawers.

My headspace and the physical space both cried out for a new work setup that was uncluttered, warm and inviting. Just as the trade winds constantly flowed through my new studio, I wanted to mould a working area that was flexible and always in transition, without my job paving the walls as it had so often in the past. For the first

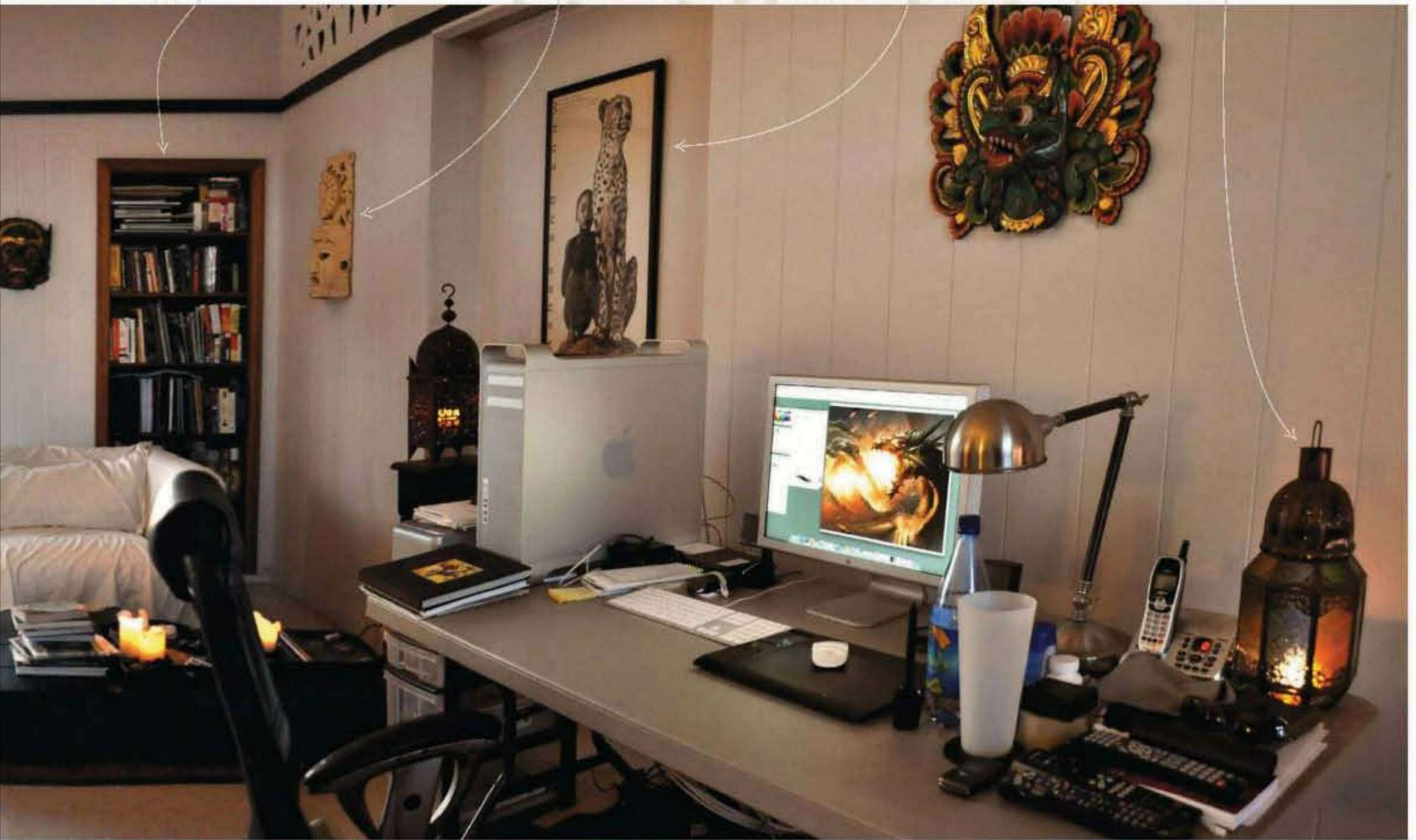
Artist news, software & events

Before I discovered audible.com for audiobooks, I picked up the CDs. I often burn through two-to-three audiobooks in a week.

The only one of my masks actually acquired from its home country – on a trip to the Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza.

I've got a thing for African cats. Especially cheetahs.

Hawaii is too warm for a fireplace, so plenty of candles suffice to set a natural tone through late nights of work.



I prefer to keep my artwork digital, rather than printed out and on the walls.

time, I was pulling out references when needed and putting them away when done. A weight was lifted from the way I looked at my work and clarity crept in to replace it. I had come to the right digs.

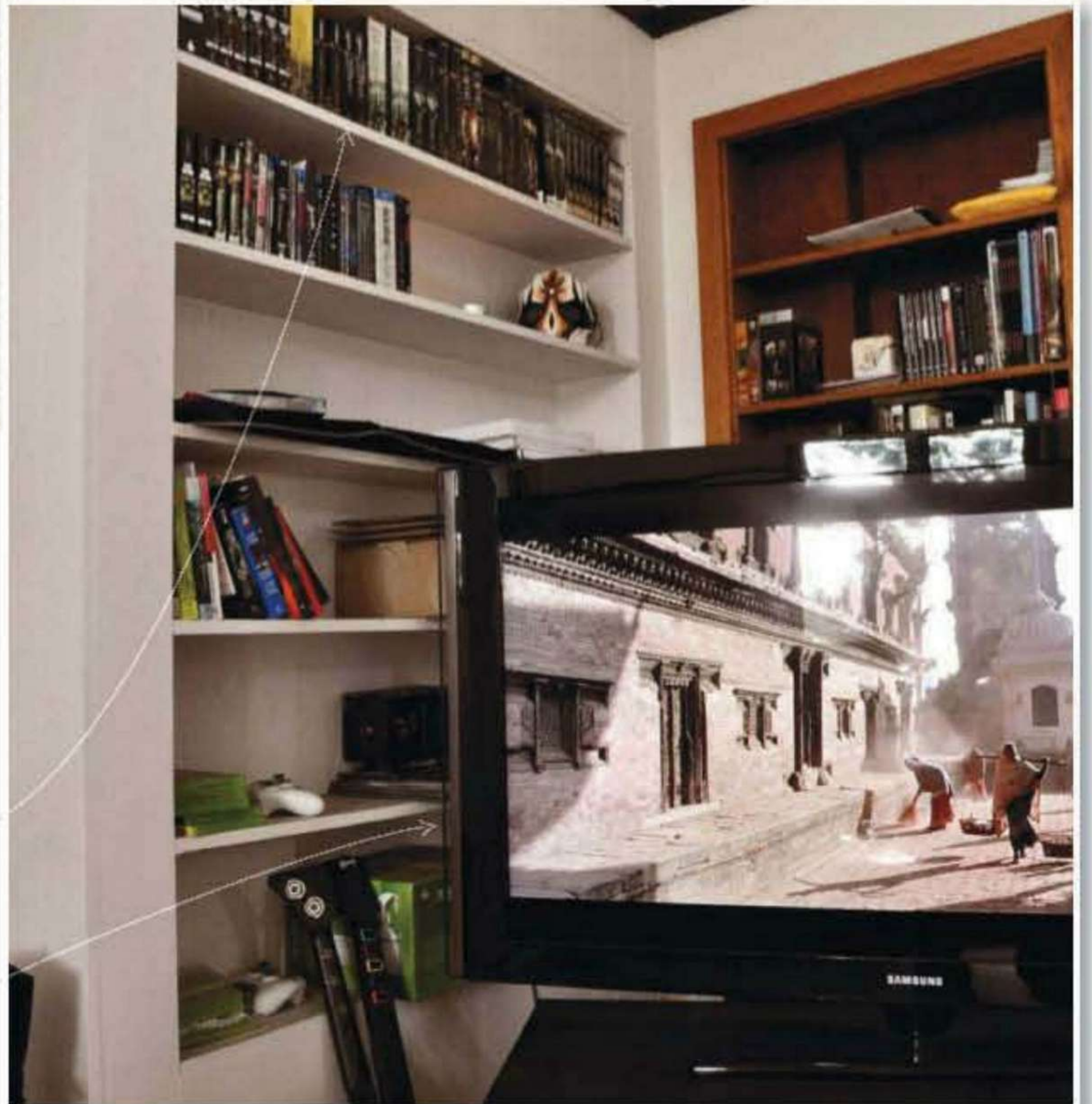
I've had a good run with this space. Yet, I think I might be feeling the twinges of a new swing coming on. Can't wait to see where it'll take me this time...

Raymond is a freelance illustrator who's worked on everything from books to comics to video games and film design.

www.raymondswanland.com

Copies of books I've illustrated the covers for.

When not listening to audiobooks or music, I've often got the TV going. Historical epics and documentaries rule the day. This is a scene from Baraka, one of my favourites.



In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Rubber bat Concept

Warner Bros. and DC have announced Gotham City Impostors, a new download-only first-person shooter where players battle for control of a Gotham City overrun by, you've guessed it, impostors. There's also this great, high-resolution piece of concept art. Click to download the art: imaginefx.com/impostor.



Adobe Software

Adobe has released a set of iPad software that interacts with Photoshop CS5. Adobe Colour Lava, Eazel and Nav can all enhance your workflow. Read our reviews on page 104, or see for yourself with Mike McHugh's great demo: adobe.ly/fzZYDX.

Zombie chic Fashion

If you like maidens, pirates, steampunks and zombies, you'll love Louisa Brooks's pet project. You can dress up a model with the key stylistic elements of each genre, ending up with some interesting, well-dressed, mashed-up monsters. Go here: bit.ly/ip8ZNR.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"For this collection of infected rodents I look at some photo references of rats, but to be honest they all look far too cute."

Manon goes against popular opinion (read: fact) that rats aren't and never will be "cute"... Page 46

Stunning backdrop

Display art Digital art meets high-street fashion for a unique window display in Ireland

It's not the first place you'd look for digital art, but Ken Coleman has managed to get his creations into a window display in



Limerick City, Ireland.

Working as part of the display team, and being a keen digital artist, Ken jumped at the chance to provide art when it was decided to create a window display resembling an art gallery.

"I was asked if I'd like to include some of my work, as well as getting other local artists involved," says Ken. "Gerry Davis and I exhibited together at a show last year, so he was first to mind."

Inspired by his display success, Ken is now focusing his talents on matte painting. "I've started building model landscapes in order to photograph them and later use them as matte paintings," he explains. "I started with a childhood favourite, Castle Grayskull."

See what he's done so far: bit.ly/kFcQGS.

Ken's Inner Ark holds pride of place in the display in Limerick City.

Subterranean, by Gerry Davis (below), also features in the display.



Opposable chums

Art collective Gorilla Artfare's new book is a gem of varied digital art – from South Korea to South Africa

The international art collective Gorilla Artfare has just released a book with a total of 71 primates contributing to its distinct style, released through CFSL Ink.

Gorilla Artbook Vol.1 is available now (see page 106 for our review), but has its roots in a French festival last year. It was here that Aurélie 'Clo' Neyret decided to make



something out of the great community she had joined to create art and "chat nonsense". "The book reflects the online community really well,"

says Clo. "There's a wide variety of styles and personalities, since our group is composed of artists from very different industries and places." The common thread is clearly their passion for art.

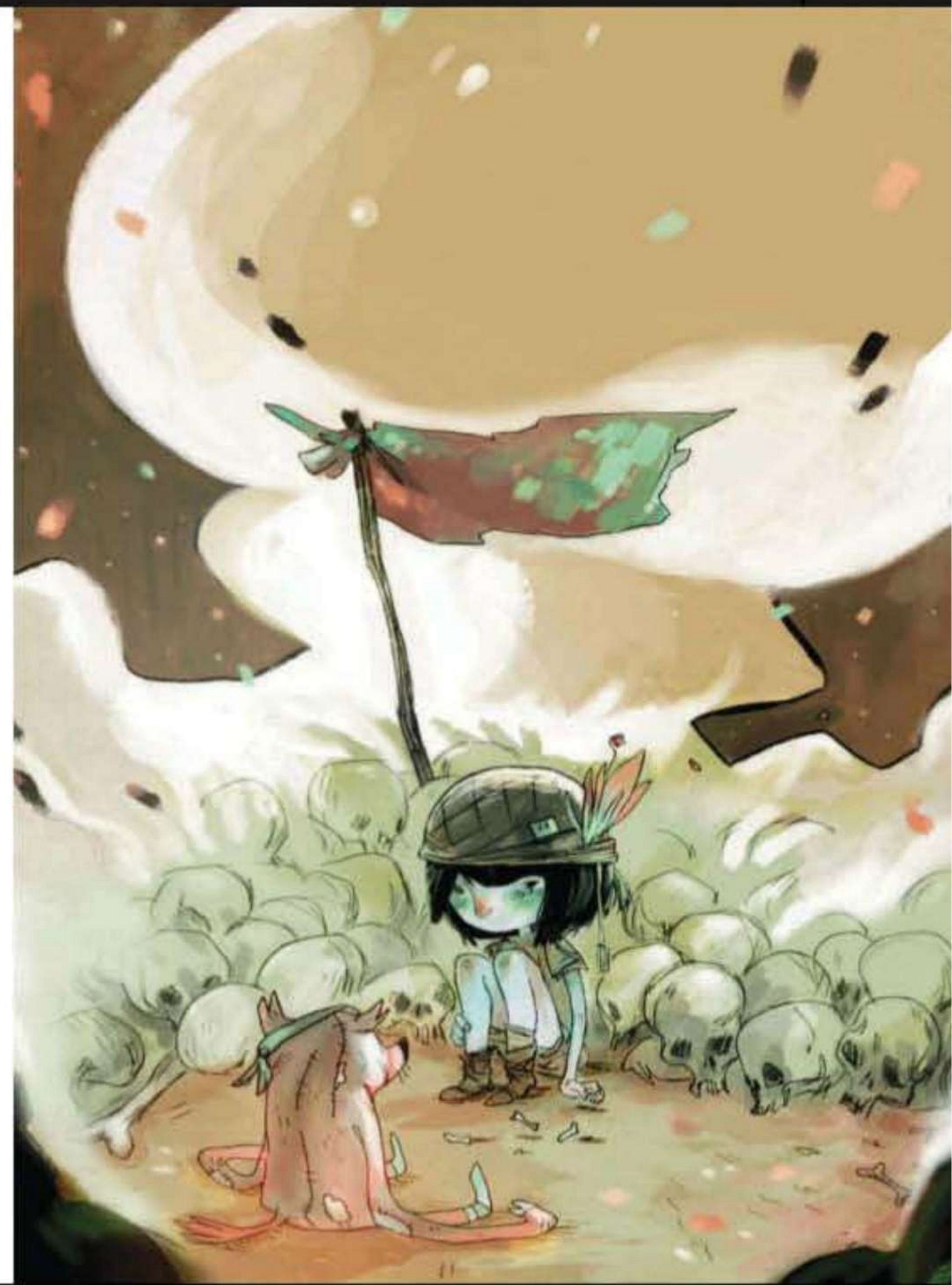
The book design was done by fellow Gorillas Victoria Maderna and Federico Piatti, while the cover art was drawn by Clo and painted by Thomas Scholes and Devin Platts. "I think the whole process reflects the nature of Gorilla Artfare," says Clo. "It's a crazy melting pot."

Visit gorillaartfare.com for more.



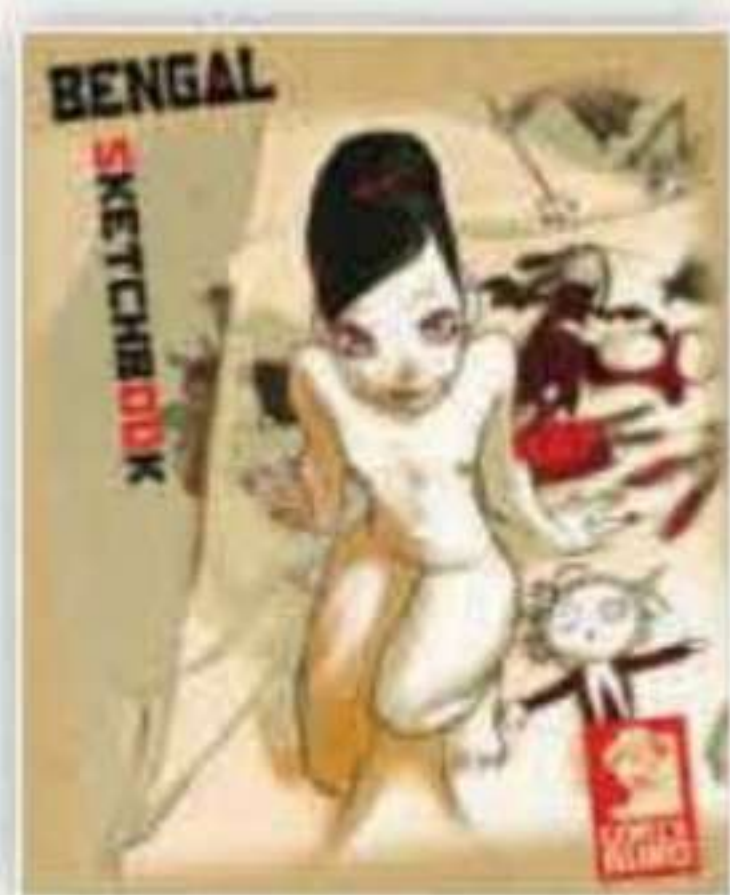
Congratulations to the collective. It's amazing what getting together to "chat nonsense" can lead to.

Gorilla Artbook Vol.1 has a wide variety of nationalities and, perhaps predictably, a wide variety of art styles too.



Tiger art

Sketchbook Art book from prolific French artist casts new light on the comic creator



The cover of Bengal's Sketchbook, published in early June.

Fans of the French artist Bengal now have the chance to enjoy the artist's fresh and open style from a different angle, with the release of a book of his sketches in June, published by Comix Buro.



Comprising a range of drawings he made as a video game design artist at Darkworks, between 2002 and 2005, plus exclusive and up-to-date art, the book features Bengal's trademark mix of über cuteness and sexual playfulness. "I was offered to do a book of my art a few years ago, but I didn't feel like doing it," says Bengal. "But the time is right now."

Have a look at more of Bengal's art on his regularly updated blog: bengalsarchives.blogspot.com.



Bengal's sketchbook just before going to print. It includes sketches from 2002 to the present.

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The power to perform

Refreshing your servers can turbo-charge your organisation's creativity

Servers are the rhythm sections of technology, the back-room boys and girls who enable the singers and guitar heroes to strut their stuff. And like real-world rhythm sections, they don't always get the attention they deserve. Organisations who happily replace high-end workstations to handle clients' ever-expanding demands may not give their servers a second thought - and that means they could be missing out on major improvements, wasting enormous sums of money and generating enough heat to boil Birmingham.

The data explosion

Our demand for data keeps increasing. Images are measured in multiples of megapixels, video has gone from SD to DVD to HD to 3D and our expectations have risen to the point where every PowerPoint presentation has to look like something from Pixar. According to industry analysts IDC, the amount of data stored by a large company doubles every 18 months - and of course that data needs more memory to handle it and more power to process it as well as more space to store it.

Our ever-expanding appetites put serious strain on servers, and hardware that seemed perky just a few years ago may be struggling to cope today - especially if you want to take advantage of the latest and greatest versions of the programs your business depends on. Before long entire data

centres are huffing and puffing, their power capacity peaking and their cooling systems overwhelmed, and downtime becomes increasingly likely.

Such downtime can be ruinously expensive, especially if you're running old software on old hardware. If the software provider has stopped supporting your particular products, per-incident support costs soon mount up. At Dell, we know a better way.

Save money, save the planet

Server technology has been advancing as quickly as our demand for data has been increasing. The latest processor technology delivers extraordinary performance with massively reduced energy demands, slashing server energy consumption and cutting the cost of doing business.

That's not all. Today's servers enable you to do much more with much less hardware. It wasn't so long ago that 4GB of memory seemed enormous, but a high performance computing server based on the Intel® Xeon® 5600 series can accommodate as much as 192GB of RAM. The change across just one or two generations has been dramatic, with the latest servers supporting two to three times the workload of their predecessors while using an average of 40% less power.

Such hardware improvements - and other

developments such as software virtualisation, which can create multiple virtual machines on a single physical server - mean that you can consolidate multiple servers' workloads on faster, more powerful, more energy efficient server hardware. That massively increases a data centre's capacity, enabling you to do more without having to find or build bigger premises - and of course your old servers can live on, either by redeploying them in a less demanding part of your organisation, by selling them or by donating them to worthy causes.

Turbo-charge your creativity

A server refresh doesn't just improve performance, reduce costs and increase stability, although of course it does all of those things. It also provides an opportunity to reap the benefits of new software. Newer programs can deliver better ways of doing things, faster and more efficient storage, and new tools to turbo-charge creativity.

We're living in tough times, and on the face of it it makes sense to squeeze every last drop from existing kit - but that can often prove to be a false economy. By investing in more reliable, more efficient and more powerful IT systems today you're gaining an enormous competitive advantage - not just today, but for years to come.

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Камбала

1



DEEP



2



PLANET OF THE ARTS



HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM. CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Staff Writer



3



CONCEPT SHIPS

Ship art | US

1 "The biggest collection of spaceship art in the world," this site brags – and if it isn't, then it's pretty close. The navigation is clunky, but you can easily lose hours here. conceptships.blogspot.com

ILLUXCON 2011

3-6 November 2011 | US

2 The fourth annual IlluXCon convention is set to take place in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Expect plenty of fantasy legends and hot new talent from this four-day event. illuxcon.com

CHRISTOPHER BURDETT

Illustrator | US

3 Chris may be a "designer of functional things for state government entities", but it's his fantasy illustrations, card art and walkthroughs that feature here. christopherburdett.blogspot.com

TILL NOWAK

3D | Germany

4 Sometimes all you need is an aubergine-headed alien to inspire you. Till's concepts will have you in stitches, or leave you in awe of their technical brilliance – or both. framebox.com



4



5



6



PETAR MESELDŽIJA

Illustrator | Netherlands

5 Petar's artwork is so good that even his sketches get nominated for Chesley Awards. This blog mainly focuses on his book cover art, with fascinating step-by-step progressions. petarmeseldzija.blogspot.com

BRUNO WAGNER

Concept artist | France

6 You may need Google Translate to read Bruno's French blog, but his nightmarish ArtRage and Photoshop rendered visions don't need much by way of explanation. yayashin.com/blog-news

map art by Jonny Duddle,
www.duddlebug.com

SKETCH JAM

Inspired by Dr Sketchy's, this live model drawing session is a popular addition to the local sketch group scene



Mystery Sketch Theatre

LOCATION: The Geek Easy, A Comic Shop, Orlando, Florida
WHEN: First Wednesday of the month
WEB: on.fb.me/kPzd4e



Left, Chris Butler adds his own props into the mix with this sketch



Right, model Arsenic (Ashley) Arson featured in the last group session



Left, Ken Knafo's sketch of an audacious T-Rex slayer captures the mood of the night perfectly!



Whether it's sultry beauties or oddly sexy dragon-slayers, Mystery Sketch Theatre has it all.

ImagineFX Forum Winners

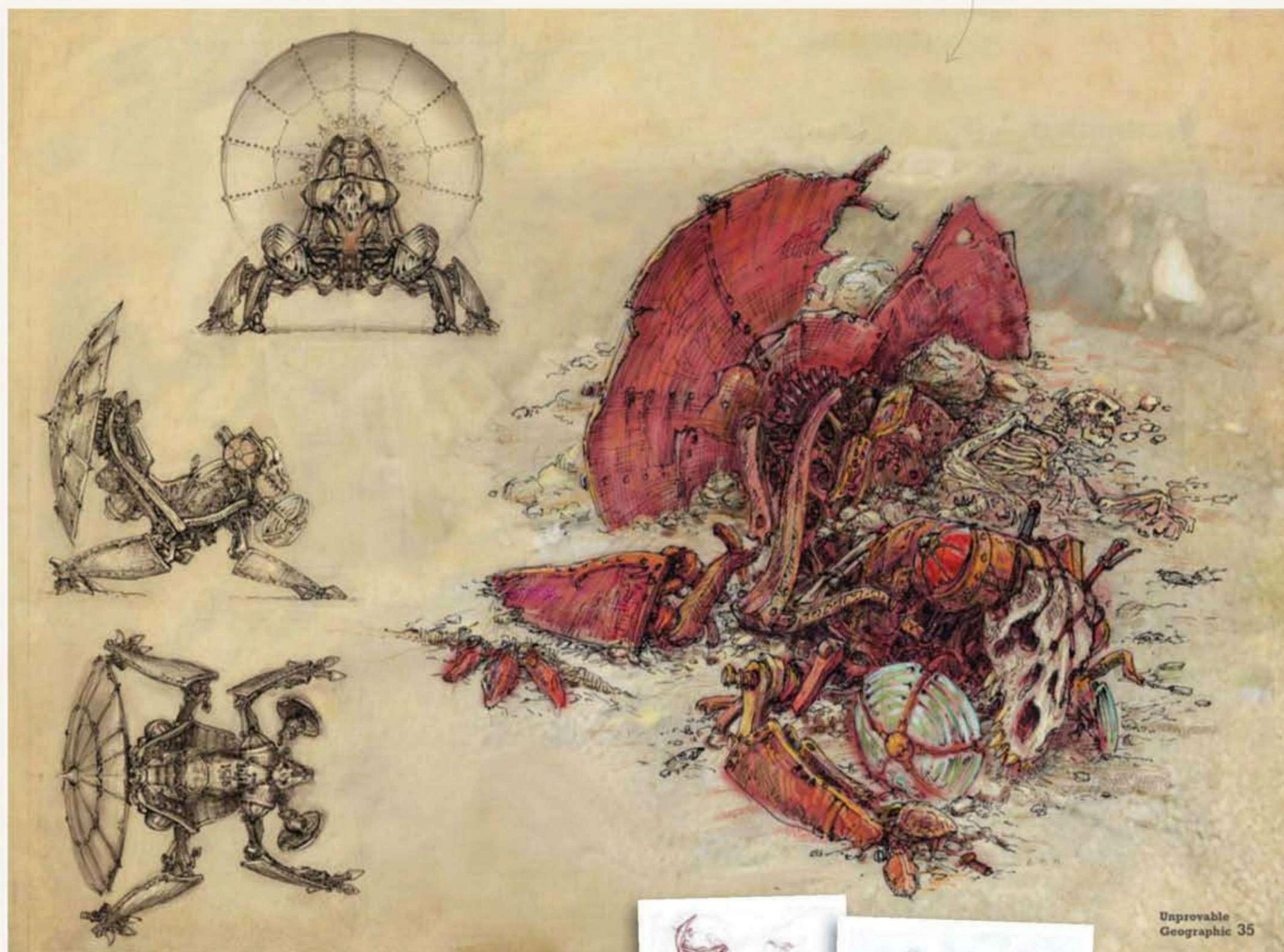
Image of the month

Back to the future An in-depth knowledge of source material stood this month's winner in good stead when tackling his time machine design



As a massive fan of HG Wells's original novel, and George Pal's design for the 1960 movie, Axel Bernal was on to a winner with this design before he even picked up his stylus. His background knowledge also gave him a fresh approach to this challenge. "The fact that the Morlocks steal the time machine in the book gave me this tiny nugget of an idea," he says, "of the Morlocks as adversaries to the time traveller - hunters instead of explorers." Mix in a touch of classic steampunk and you've got this wonderful motorcycle design.

MYFX TITLE: The Time Machine
WINNER: Axel Bernal (Quetzal)
GALLERY: imaginefx.com/Quetzal



Unprovable
Geographic 35

FORUM CRIT



"This is a no-brainer. The machine has so much character. The main image is great, too. This is a fantastic style that I'd love to see more of." **Michael Lee-Graham (Mleeg-Art)**



Axel's winning image channels the spirit of HG Wells's 1895 novel, *The Time Machine*, with flair.

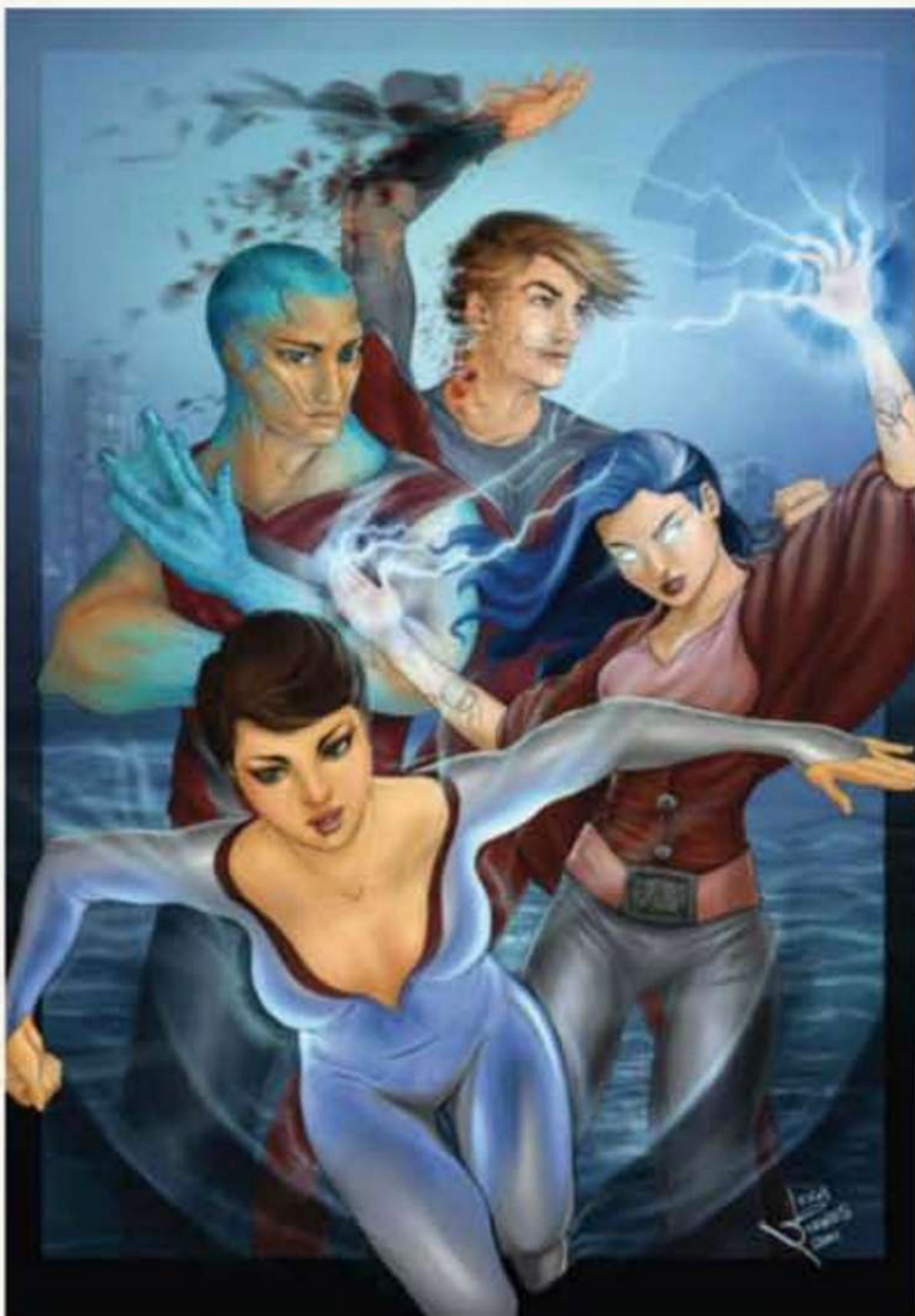
Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



MYFX TITLE: The Fabulous 4
WINNER: Leigh Sparks (Lunar)
GALLERY: imaginefx.com/luna-s



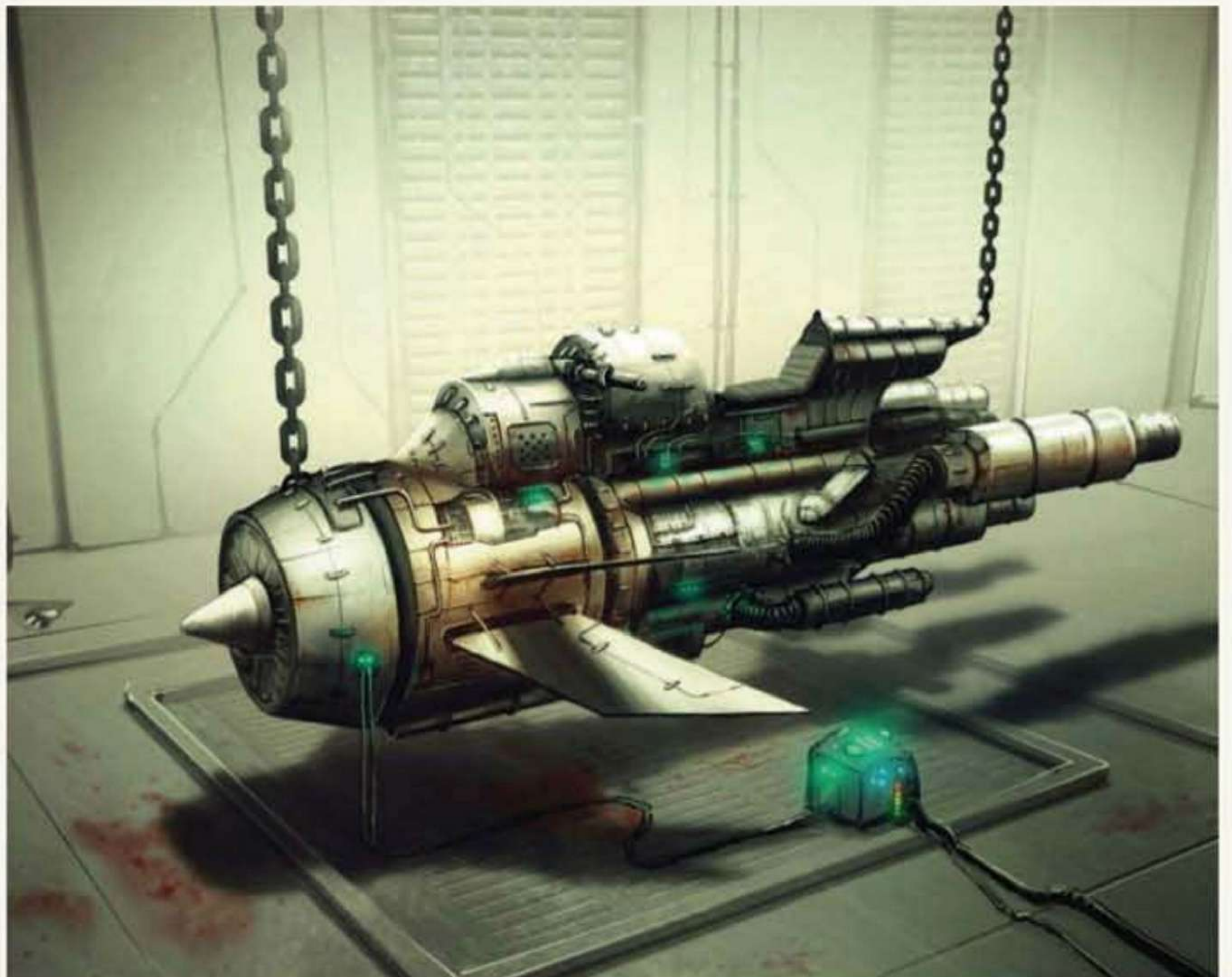
"I opted for a cover composition to show off their powers, and what I enjoyed most was making the characters different yet cohesive when placed together. I wanted to go against convention by having two female leads and no hulking character, which challenged me to explore how they'd work together in a more unusual way."



MYFX TITLE: The Backwater Rumble
WINNER: Daniel Tyka (No Reason)
GALLERY: imaginefx.com/noreason



"I love super-bikes and the general idea behind them: big engines, massive wheels and a driver on top! I wanted to add a twist and make this design much faster - hence the jet engine."



MYFX TITLE: Yo-ho-ho!
WINNER: Max Hugo (Mhugo)
GALLERY: imaginefx.com/mhugo



"I enjoyed this challenge a lot, although I had some problems getting into it because vehicles and technical stuff have always been a little out of my comfort zone. I went with a huge, steampunk-ish, fortress-like ship - big enough to swallow its hapless victims."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, **Claire Howlett**, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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Vocal support

I'm writing to show my appreciation for the voice commentary on the Marta Dahlig video in issue 70. I love reading ImagineFX and have been a subscriber for the past year now, but find it difficult to complete your workshops, and quite often only read the article in the magazine – which in itself is great, of course!

When reading through the last issue I noticed that the workshop stated there was a voice commentary on the video, which encouraged me to give this one a go. I find that having someone speaking you through it makes things much more relaxing – it certainly helps me learn more. I hope more workshop videos follow this trend.

Karl Marshall, via email

Claire replies Hello Karl, it was great to see Marta back in the magazine, wasn't it? We always try to get audio to accompany the videos on the DVD, but some of the workshop artist decline, whether it's due to language issues or other reasons.

Aiming high

I'm a 24-year-old electronic engineering student in my final year of study and have realised that I want to follow a career in the concept or comic book industry. Knowing that these industries are very cut-throat, I thought I'd turn to the wonderful ImagineFX staff for answers.

As well as providing a great workshop for the magazine, Marta recorded an audio track for her accompanying video, which has gone down well with readers.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 71?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 54 for details on how to get hold of one.

At the moment, my art skills are far from being competent for either of these industries, but I'm positive and willing to learn with the little time I have. What I want to ask is, with enough practice and determination, would I be able to break through into the concept art or comic book industry? Or would my age (especially since it'll take at least a year to hone my art skills), lack of art school and lack of experience count against me?

David Langford Weatherhead, via email

Claire replies David, if you have dedication, determination and patience then the world is your oyster! Many artists in this magazine talk about getting a lucky break, but don't be fooled by this. It takes a lot of effort, daily drawing, learning from others, posting on galleries and going to portfolio reviews to be in the right place at the right time to be 'lucky'. Someone has to get these dream jobs, and with a bit of work why shouldn't it be you?

Living the dream on the pages of ImagineFX

I would like to thank you and the whole gang at ImagineFX for making me the Reader FXPosé Artist of the Month for the May 2011 issue. I heard from Paul of Ballistic Media, who said he'd seen my artwork featured in the magazine, but he didn't mention that I was Artist of the Month. So you can just imagine how surprised I was when I found out. It was mind-blowing! It totally made my week! Thank you very much!

Artist of the Month was a dream come true for me. Heck, I was only aiming to have my work featured somewhere – anywhere in your magazine. My next dream would be to do an article for ImagineFX or even do a cover, if the gods would be so kind. I will work harder and do more paintings to make that a reality. What must one do or achieve to have that privilege?

Anton Gustilo, via email

Claire replies Anton, to become a workshop artist all you need to achieve is spellbinding art, so it looks like you're well on your way. For anyone else wishing to wangle a Reader FXPosé Artist of the Month accolade, head on over to page 19 for details of how to submit your art.



Anton's art caught the eye of a head honcho over at Ballistic Media, publishers of a whole range of respected art books, including *Exotique* and *Exposé*.



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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Art's not just for the youngsters

It's only recently that I discovered ImagineFX – first the website then the magazine – and I must say I fell in love with both, especially the magazine because it's got everything I ever wanted in an art mag: amazing art, wicked workshops and lots of resources. However, I was very disappointed when, after I started reading with great enthusiasm about your Rising Stars 2011, I realised entry was only permitted for people who are 25 years old or younger.

Here's the thing: I'm 34 years old and although I always wanted to be a concept artist, I took a different route and became a tattoo artist. Over the years I've realised that my real passion lies in digital art, not skin art.

I'm pretty sure there must be tons of people like me out there who went through a late awakening and are now trying their best to realise their dreams. Don't we deserve a chance to show what we can do and try to land our dream job, too?

Please consider a change on this rule – if not for this year maybe for the next one – and give everybody an equal chance of fighting for what they really want.

Fernando, via email

Claire replies Hello Fernando, for Rising Stars we thought we'd make sure that younger artists got a real chance of exposure to the industry. For all the other artists, there are many ways to get your art out there, including in ImagineFX, so send in your art.



The age limit for Rising Stars means younger artists get a real chance to show off their art.

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Designs for life

Book launch Titan Publishing brings seven brilliant new Design Studio Press books to the UK

Bringing the world of concept art a little closer while inspiring sci-fi and fantasy artists to improve, collaborate and share knowledge, California's Design Studio Press is one of a kind. And now, Titan Books is offering seven new books from Design Studio Press in the UK. They include **Sentury II**, the new book from Syd Mead; **Moonshine**, showcasing the personal paintings of DreamWorks artists; and **Animals: Real and Imagined** by esteemed creature designer Terryl Whitlatch.

Another standout book in the series is **Battle Milk 2**, which covers concept art and is created by a team of six artists behind the Star Wars: The Clone Wars TV series.

Uniquely, the book doesn't simply focus on digital painting, but also covers pen and ink drawing and miniature photography to offer workshops free from art direction, designed simply to inspire.

"We'd been sharing our work consistently through the whole process, so we would see a couple of really cool new images from each artist every few days or weeks," says Battle Milk 2 contributor Wayne Lo. "The variety of contrasting and complementary images from all six artists jumped out at you page after page!"

DRIVE TIME

This collection was orchestrated by Scott Robertson, who set up Design Studio Press

to bring together artists and inspire others. "For me, teaching at its best is like sharing a secret answer to a question that someone had been searching for," says Scott, whose own book **Drive** features skillful vehicle sketches and renderings, aided by his entertainment design students from Art Center College of Design, Daniel Gardner and Annis Naeem.

Collaboration and inspiration are the watchwords of Design Studio Press – and these seven new books, distributed by Titan, represent the best of this ideal. Whether you want to master skills like storytelling and vehicle design or just be wowed by stunning imaginary creatures and worlds, there's something here for you.

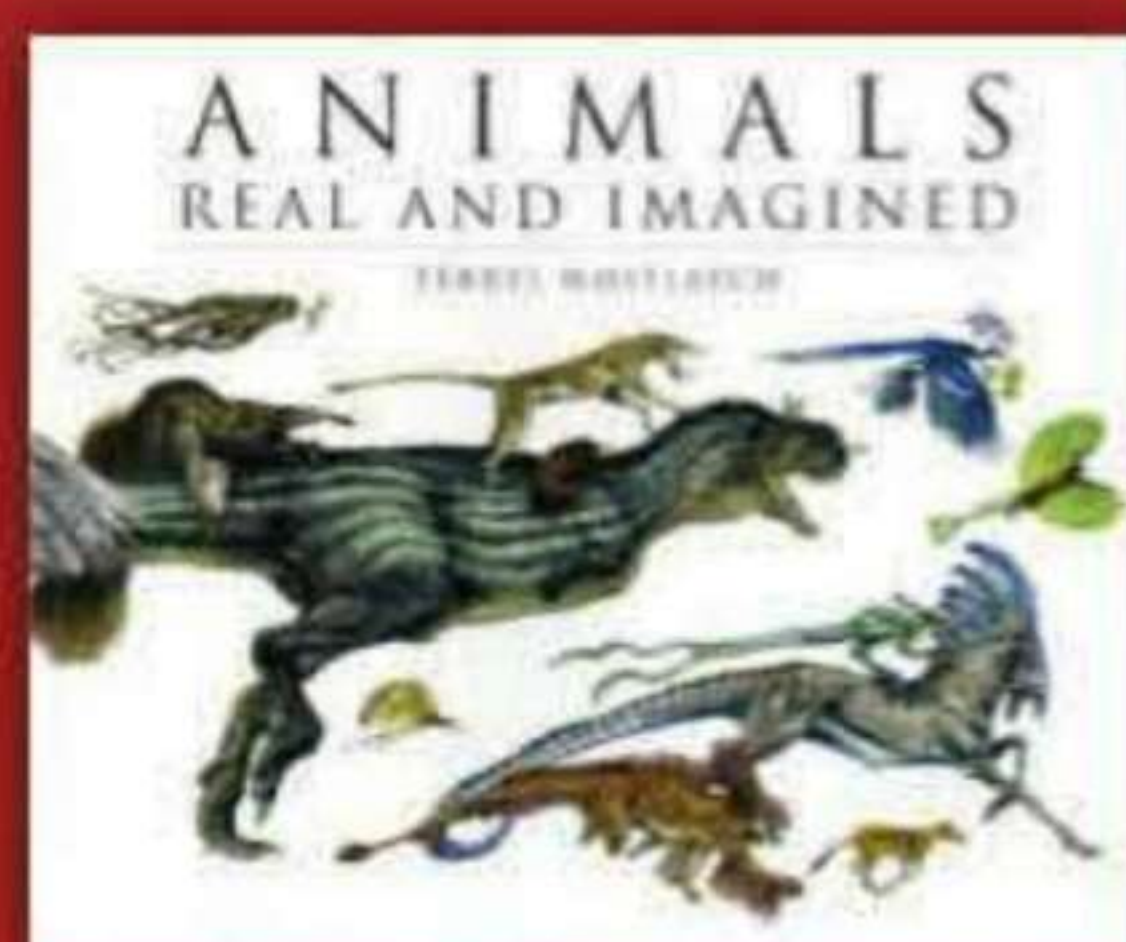
SEVEN ESSENTIAL ART BOOKS

Titan delivers the goods with its new batch of visionary art books covering vehicle design, storyboarding, creature painting and more...



Sentury II Syd Mead

Syd Mead is the legendary visual futurist behind Blade Runner, Star Trek: The Motion Picture and TRON, amongst others. His latest book collects illustrations from the artists many film, movie and architectural projects with insightful comment.



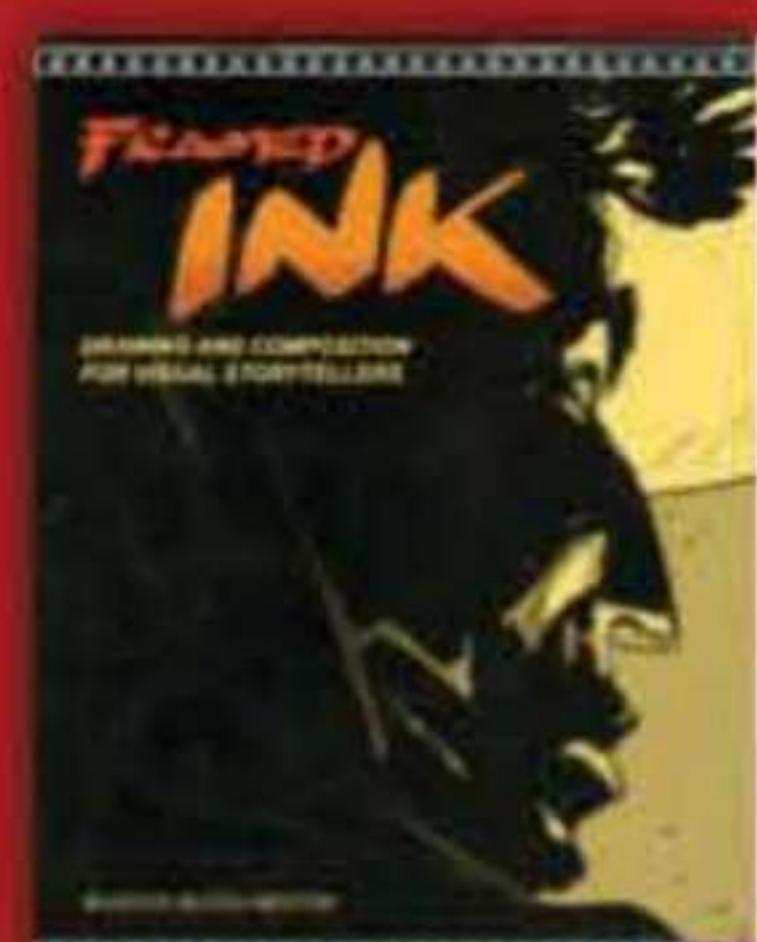
Animals: Real and Imagined Terryl Whitlatch

Considered one of the best animal artists working today, Terryl Whitlatch's book bursts with boundless imagination. Here she shares her vast knowledge of anatomy and animal movement.



Battle Milk 2 Wayne Lo, Thang Lee, Jackson Sze, David Le Merrer, Kilian Plunkett

Artists behind Star Wars: The Clone Wars provide a rewarding collection of workshops that span a variety of techniques, styles and subjects, including miniature photography and digital art.



Framed Ink Marcos Mateu-Mestre

Whether you want to learn the tricks of storyboarding or graphic novel layouts, Marcos Mateu-Mestre's **Framed Ink** is a unique insight into how to compose visual storytelling through easy to follow and informative step-by-step tutorials.



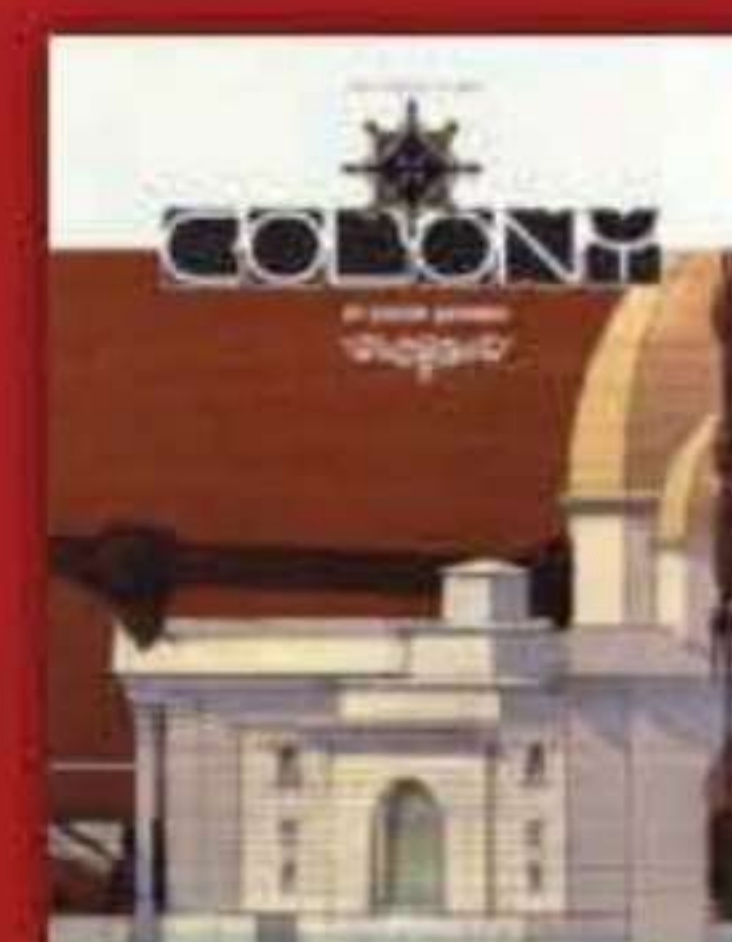
Moonshine Various (45 DreamWorks artists and animators)

Moonshine is an inspirational collection of personal paintings, both traditional and digital, from leading film and animation artists that offers fresh images across a dazzling array of styles and techniques.



Drive Scott Robertson, Daniel Gardner, Annis Naeem

As well as running Design Studio Press, Scott Robertson is also author of a number of design books, **Drive** is his latest. Covering the full gambit of car concepts from sports to military uses, this is essential reading.



The Story of the Colony Viktor Antonov

This latest book by Viktor Antonov, the BAFTA award-winning art director and novelist, is a mesmerising blend of novel and illustrated book that follows Gabriel Duban's epic journey to discover a lost city in the heart of 19th century North Africa.

All of these books are available at good bookstores and online retailers or via www.titanbooks.com/dsp



RISING STARS 2011



Could you be one of our Rising Stars of 2011? If so, time is running out to enter this year's search. Whether you're digital or traditionally based, Rising Stars 2011 aims to discover, promote and celebrate the best of today's young sci-fi and fantasy artists. And we want you to enter – now!

The Rising Stars 2011 event is the opportunity for all artists aged 25 or under to showcase their art. Our aim is to champion artists and the art community, and the Rising Stars event is our way to shine a light on new and emerging talent.

We've teamed up with some of the leading art directors from the film, video games and book industries to help the cause. Our team of independent judges include Blizzard's art director Sam Didier,

CALL FOR ENTRIES
Do you have what it takes to impress the judges and stand out from the crowd? Then enter this year's Rising Stars campaign and make your bid for stardom!

Wizards of the Coast's Jon Schindehette and Framestore's Kevin Jenkins. Together they represent years of professional experience.

Whether you're a full-time artist, a student or just want to show off your work, we want to hear from you. International entrants are welcome and there's no charge for entry. The 10 best entrants will be featured in issue 75 of ImagineFX, on sale 20 September in the UK. The deadline is fast approaching, so enter today!



Some of the winners from last year's Rising Stars campaign. Send in your art and your work could be showcased to a world-wide audience.

SEND IN YOUR ART

Entrants are invited to submit five digital or traditional pieces of portfolio work and a short biography. The deadline for all entries is 1 August 2011. Please don't send original works and make sure that you have copies to spare of anything submitted.

You can post your submission on a CD to:

**Rising Stars 2011
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW
UK**

For more information about competition, please visit www.imaginefx.com/risingstars.

THE RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, and their immediate families or agents are not eligible to enter this competition.
2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded.
3. Entrants must be aged 25 or under on 1 August 2011.
4. Entries must be received by 1 August 2011, which is the closing date.
5. All entries will be judged by the ImagineFX team and an independent panel (see list). Their decision is final.
6. The winners must agree to allow their images to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional or marketing material.
7. ImagineFX and Future Publishing reserve the right to postpone the selection of the winners indefinitely if the standard of quality is not to the required level.
8. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork.
9. All information is correct at the time of going to press.

THE PANEL



IRENE GALLO

As art director at Tor Books since 1994, Irene helps to develop talented new artists as well as work with some of the world's leading illustrators. She also sits on the board of directors of the Society of Illustrators and runs regular painting demos with Dan Dos Santos at theArtDepartment blog. Irene is a perfect judge of any rising star.

www.tor.com



SAM DIDIER

Art director Sam is one of Blizzard's longest-serving employees and his art has been the building blocks of many of the developer's big games. With a track record of spotting new artists on the Blizzard forums and turning them into pros, there's no better way to get into the video games industry than getting your work seen by Sam.

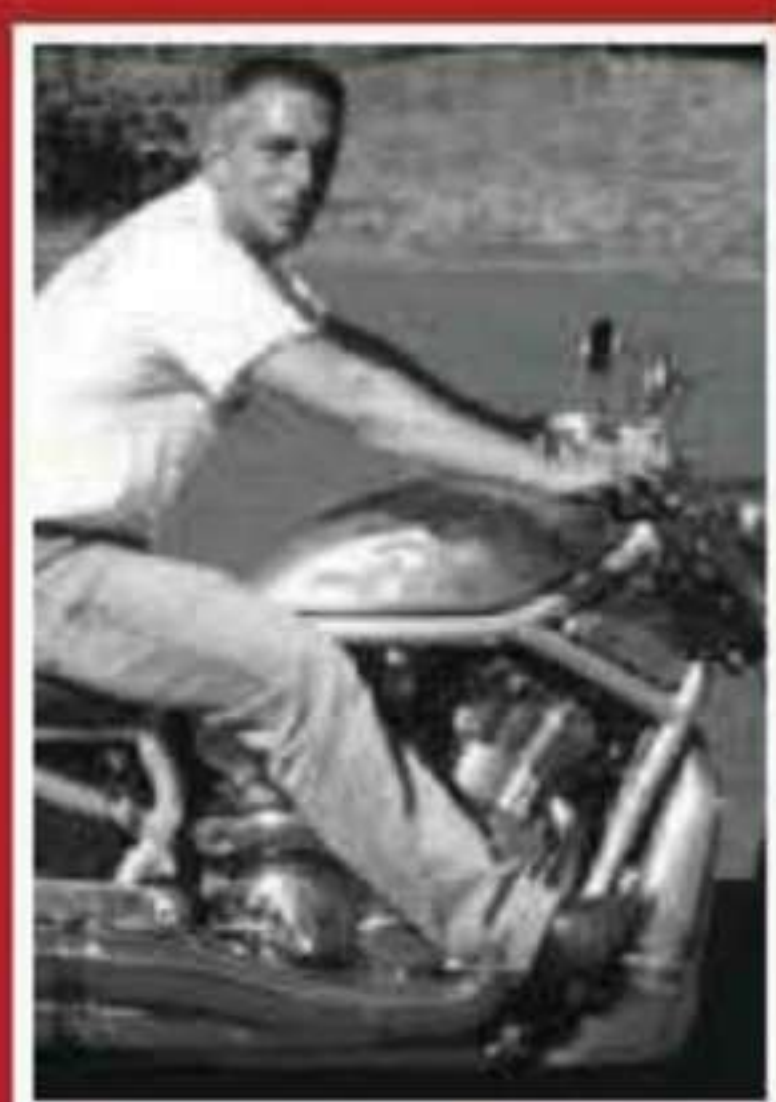
www.blizzard.com



KEVIN JENKINS

The director of Framestore's recently created art department has an impressive CV, not least for his hand in its BAFTA- and Oscar-nominated VFX work. Framestore is one of the world's most successful VFX studios, and concept art is playing a big part in this. If you want to break into this film industry, impressing Kevin is a great way to start.

www.framestore-cfc.com



JON SCHINDEHETTE

Senior art director for Wizards of the Coast, Jon Schindehette ensures the art direction across all of Dungeons & Dragons projects fits together. Some task! Yet he still finds time to champion fantasy art and artists at every level. He's a great supporter of the art community and his blog, ArtOrder, is required reading for all aspiring artists.

www.wizards.com/dnd



MARK CHIARELLO

As art director at DC Comics, Mark Chiarello sees a lot of new artists work and has plenty of experience championing rising stars of the comic industry. Before DC, Mark worked at Marvel and even spent time as an illustrator for DisneyWorld immediately after graduating from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Believe us, he's done the hard graft.

www.dccomics.com

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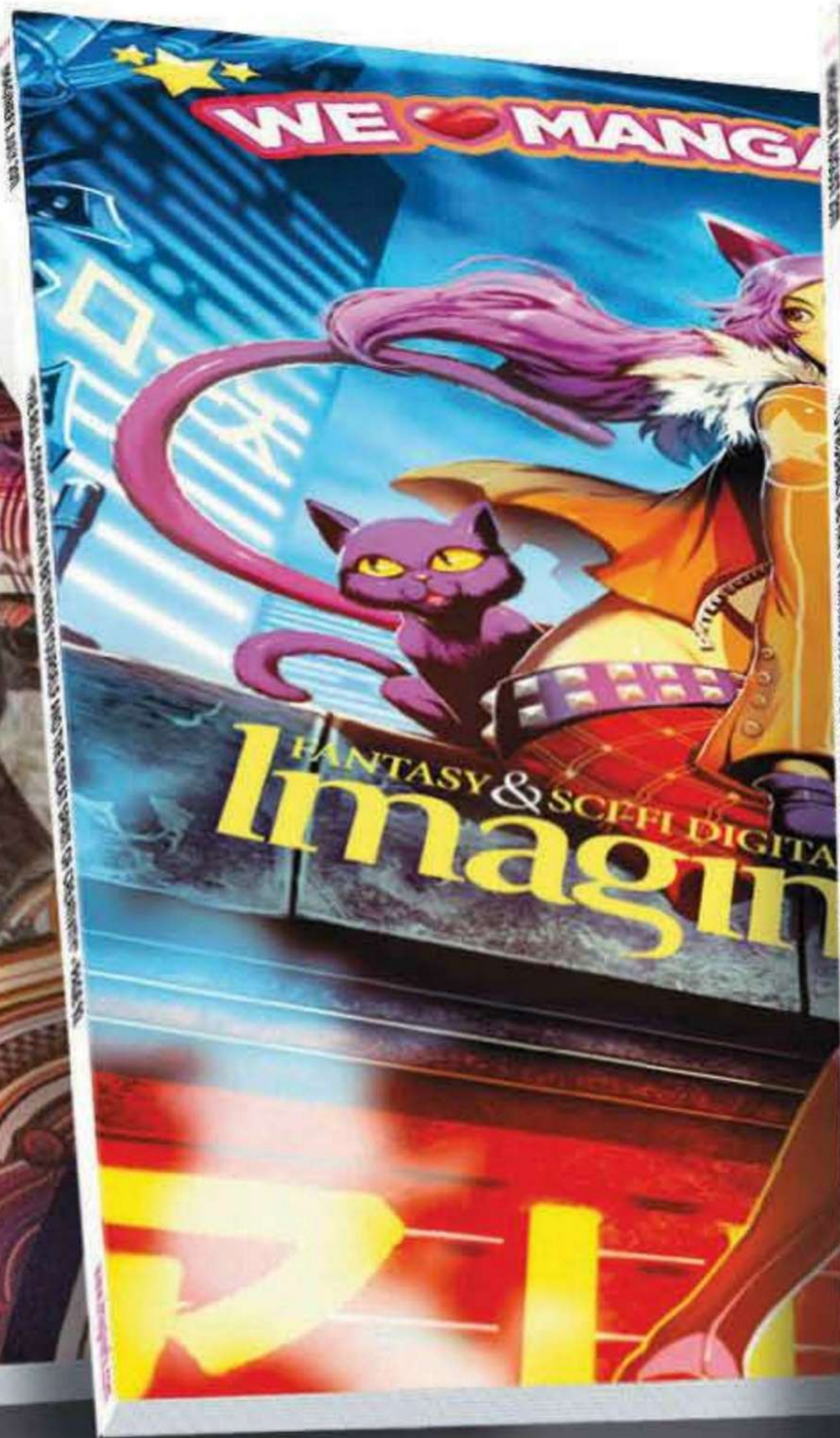
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Turn to page 72

Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones, concept artist



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."

Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

LIVE IN THE US/CANADA? TURN TO PAGE 93

Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Daarken



US-based Daarken is a freelance artist who works in the fantasy and games sector. His clients include Blizzard and Wizards of the Coast.

www.daarken.com

Dave Allsop



UK-based Dave is a fantasy illustrator for Wizards of the Coast, Nightfall Games and White Wolf among others. He also works in video games.

www.daveallsop.info

Manon



Manon is a freelance artist who specialises in fantasy, horror and portraiture. She enjoys painting drooling beasts and cute creatures.

www.artbymanon.com

Lauren K Cannon



Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Brynn Metheney



Brynn was raised in the Mojave desert and moved to the Bay Area in 2006. Creature and animal illustrations are her forte.

www.brynnart.com

Mark Facey



Mark is a freelance illustrator and concept artist with a love for creatures and world building. He lives in the Midlands, England.

creaturejournal.tumblr.com

Bryan Wynia



Bryan is a character artist at Sony Santa Monica, CA. He's also a character and creature design instructor at The Concept Design Academy.

bryanwynia.blogspot.com

Question

How do I achieve that mottled shell look for my creature's armour?

Daniel Keith, England



Answer

Brynn replies



Adding patterns to your creatures is a great way to make them seem more believable.

Animals use colourations and pattern to help camouflage their bodies, send messages to predators about deadly poison and attract potential mates. Fantastical creatures might do the same.

To give your creature's armour or epidermis a mottled look you can use a simple brush in Photoshop to add spots and texture. It's a good idea to make your own library of brushes for this, because you'll then be able to control the pattern

Achieving a mottled effect is easy once you have the brush and technique mastered.

yourself. Even taking the time to paint in your own spots, one by one, can mean your creature's markings looking more organic and less 'brush-made' or 'automated'.

I usually paint my dark spots on a Multiply layer and lighter spots on a layer set to Normal. Adding in translucent shadows and opaque highlights will make the spots appear like they're part of the creature. Of course, looking at real animals helps tremendously. You can obtain plenty of ideas for patterns and markings from watching nature documentaries and examining wildlife photography.

Step-by-step: Give a creature an interesting look



1 When starting any piece of creature art I like to lay my colour in first and ensure that the basic shapes are blocked in. This will help me see where highlights and shadows will go later. Don't try and refine the painting too much – at this stage in the process it's about setting guides for later down the line.



2 For the next step I add in a scratched-up texture across areas of the body. This worn-in appearance to the creature ensures that the beast doesn't look too neat, too manufactured. I like to do this by hand and make the scratches larger and smaller with pressure sensitivity, so that the marks don't look artificial.



3 After I've turned down the opacity on the scratches, I'll add in some spotting on the creature's natural armour. Using a brush I made, I blot in spots on a Multiply layer. I'll adjust the opacity, erase away some areas to add a level of variation, and finally paint in highlights on top of my painting.

Question

Do you have any tips for painting leathery, elephant-like skin?

Matthew Johnston, Wales



You can play around with this kind of skin to create some weird elephant-like creatures. Notice how within any section of skin there are areas of varying contrast.

Answer

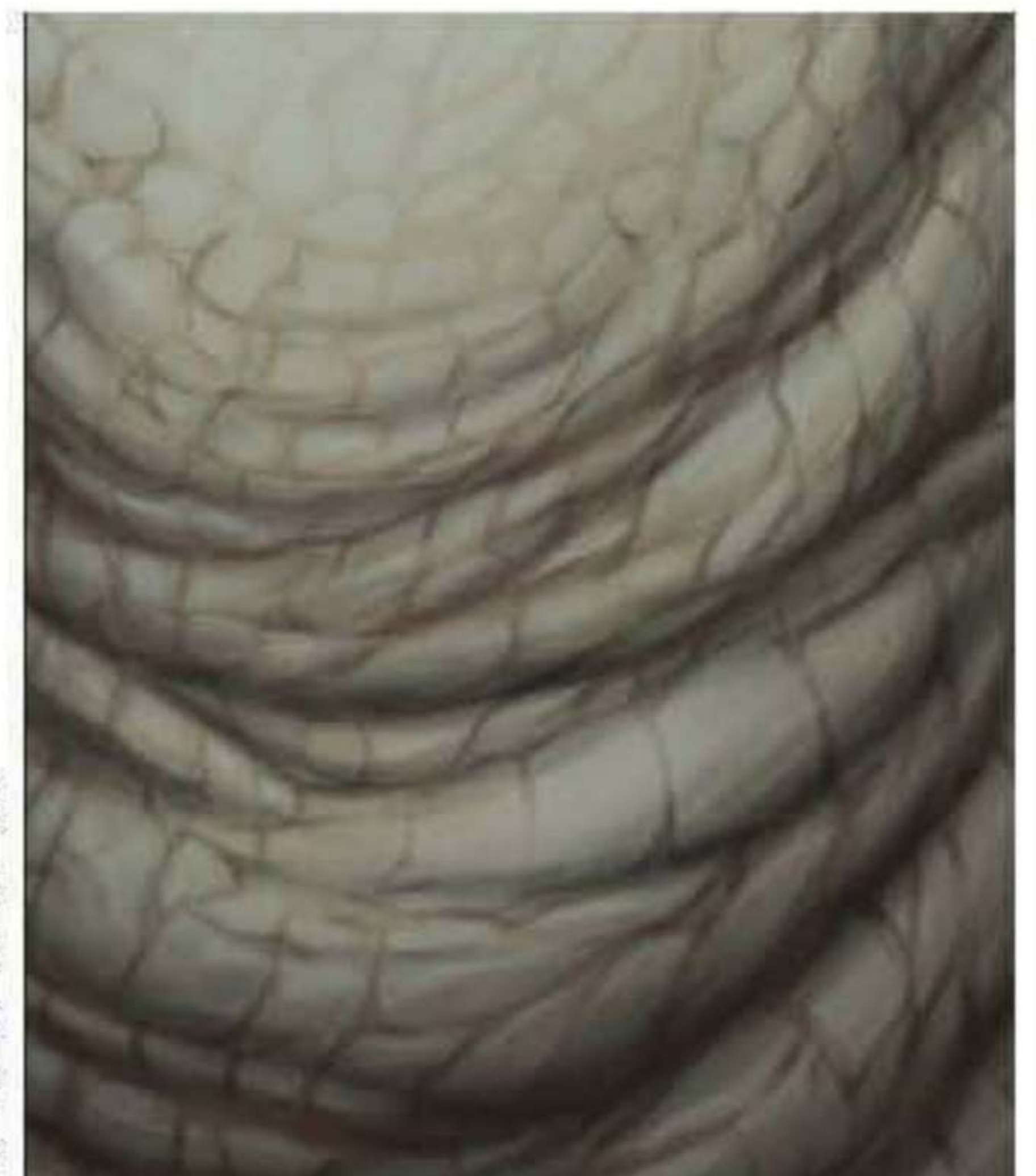
Dave replies



Other than just being thick and grey, the skin of an elephant or rhino has indentation and deep wrinkles, which give it an almost scale-like appearance.

The main difference is that the elephant-like skin is more flexible and doesn't have the glossy sheen of a reptile's; rather, it's dull, opaque and has a dry look about it. It also tends to be loose and wrinkled around joints and undersides where the beast needs greater mobility. Conversely, the skin is stretched and taut across the larger bones like the shoulders and upper skull. These areas appear more featureless and tight.

When I'm tackling a drawing or painting involving an elephant-like creature I try to make the skin a bit like an ill-fitting coat. It isn't uniformly tailored – instead, it crumples and distends at varying points on the body. When I'm rendering the creatures I push these extremities to their limits. The skin sags heavy at the joints, but is tight as a drum on the shoulders and back.



As the skin becomes loose and begins to fold the definition of the wrinkles becomes more pronounced. In lighter areas where the skin is stretched there's almost no detail at all.

Artist's secret

PAINTING SCALES AND SKIN

Try painting scales or wrinkles on a separate layer. Set Opacity at about 50 per cent and paint in the big areas of light and shadow underneath it on a new layer. It'll help you to build up the form without losing these details.

Question

How do I paint a snarling werewolf? Drool is a bonus!

Michael Gough, US



Give your werewolf lots of intention in his vicious gaze. He can't wait for his next victim...

For great drool, paint on a separate layer on a low opacity to start. I use a white or cream colour. Then pick out highlights on a new layer.

Answer

Manon replies



For anything werewolf related I always revert back to reference. For example, if you Google 'snarling wolf' you'll find a plethora of toothy faces to use for inspiration. It would really help if you did a few pages of sketches of wolves first, just to get that image firmly planted in your brain-bank of reference. Then it'll jumble up with everything else you have in there, making for a far more interesting beastie.

Decide whether you want a more humanoid werewolf or an animalistic creature. I'm going to go for more beast than man, so I'll concentrate on a long snout and big teeth.

Notice how when an animal is snarling, the lips curl back to show the gums and teeth and scrunch up the nose. Once you've got your snarl sorted, go to town on buckets of drool and blood dripping from his mouth. Use plenty of layers for this – Multiply is a great tool to use for blood layers, starting with low opacity and building over the top with more of the same. Then you can finish it all off with glistening highlights.

Question

What's the best way to create and sculpt alien skin using ZBrush?

Cindy Pincus, The Philippines

Answer

Bryan replies



First, make sure you have strong primary and secondary forms. I use a combination of alphas, sculpting brushes and surface noise to suggest the feeling of organic skin. Think about the surface and texture. How thick is the skin in some areas? How thin is it in others? And, where are the boney landmarks on the character?

Starting with the Surface Noise feature, I block out an overall detail level, keeping it subtle. This detail pass is the foundation. Then, using various standard and custom alphas, I create more unique pores and wrinkles. Using alphas is a great way to create directional pores and areas of interest. I then use brushes such as the Dam Standard brush to create wrinkles, moles, scars and veins. You can also mask your entire character and use the Inflate brush to create some fleshy areas on your character.



The surface noise feature is a great way to create an overall texture quickly. You can use the modifiers to adjust the surface noise.

In the final image you can see how this subtle skin detail adds an extra realism to your character.



Question

How do I make a corrupted bear's paws look really big and mutated?

Marshall Devin, US

Answer

Dave replies



The thing to get across when you're drawing or painting the result of a mutation is that the unfortunate effect is neither orderly nor intentional. It distorts the body in strange and outlandish ways. It's very much the opposite of nature and evolution because it doesn't serve any purpose. I find it interesting to draw creatures like these because you're not confined in any way by natural laws. When you're dealing with abominations, pretty much anything goes.

In mutating the claws and paws of a bear I'll start by looking at the basic shape and

form of the appendage and creatively start heading in the opposite direction. Bears have stumpy, thick paws so I immediately look at ways to lengthen and stretch their shape, perhaps leaning more towards the anatomy of a human or an ape's hand. Fur covers the entire body of a bear so I'd look at removing large sections of its pelt as well for extra effect.

Contrast in mutation is good because the extraneous new elements play against the normal aspects of the creature. If the paw looks bizarre and freakish, then I've succeeded in my task.

Question

Is there a quick way to paint a feathered wing?

Sarah Sanderson, New Zealand

Answer

Lauren replies



This is one of those awesome subjects that seems complicated, but is actually easy once you know the tricks. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that it's often more effective to imply detail, rather than rendering the detail tightly, because it saves time and gives better results. This is especially true with wings and feathers.

The hardest part is the shape. Make sure you know what kind of wing you wish to depict. For example, an eagle's wing is very different from a sparrow's – not just in the colour and size, but also in shape. Understanding the silhouette is half the battle! Simply block in the shape to start with. Using a semi-soft round brush, paint in subtle colour

variations. Even if the feathers are a solid colour, you want some small hue variations to keep it from looking flat. Feathers themselves seem flat, but they do have a subtle curve and dimension, so try to imply that with shading.

Once done, you can then add edge details with a smaller version of the same brush – a simple brush stroke will define the edges of individual feathers, and another will define the shaft of the feather. Keep in mind that it's not necessary to show both features in every feather on the wing.

If the wing has a clear pattern on it then paint that in last. I recommend rendering the wing with the lighter colour first, and then painting in the darker stripes or spots on top.



A few well-placed brushstrokes can go a long way towards detailing a wing of feathers. With very little work, you can define a sense of depth and texture.

Artist's secret

THE ALL-PURPOSE BRUSH



A semi-soft round brush like the one pictured here is an all-inclusive tool for wing painting. It's ideal for creating soft blends and small (but not too sharp) details alike, simply

by toggling the brush size. I find that it's also a great brush for human hair.

Step-by-step: Turn an ordinary paw into a monstrous claw



1 Here's the basic version of a bear's arm. Notice how short and ordered the animal's claws are. The fur is uniformly short and covers the entire arm. The paw itself is broad, but quite squat. As I start to distort the image I'll take all these features into consideration and try to alter them as much as possible.



2 I start by lengthening and broadening the claws. Because it's a mutation I try to lose the neatness and scale of the claws by twisting them into odd angles. I want them to look chaotic so I only stretch a couple of them. I also make them more serrated and hooked. It's starting to get ugly, but I can still push it further.



3 To make the paw look disfigured I strip away a patch of fur to show the monstrous growth occurring beneath. At this stage I want to make sure that this is a severe mutation and not just a bad case of mange, so I make this flesh bulbous and overgrown. The finishing touches I add are uncharacteristic clumps of long hair.

Question

As a beginner, how can I incorporate ZBrush into my Photoshop process?

Heidi Bratt, US

Answer

Bryan replies



ZBrush is an effective way to digitally sculpt out your character and creature designs. You can quickly create a digital maquette that can be used as a foundation for a painting or drawing. I use ZBrush for most of my design process. I can very quickly sculpt designs that can be used in multiple production pipelines.

After reading a character brief I'll jump right into sculpting and designing. I spend anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour blocking out a character in ZBrush. This process is called speed sculpting. Typically, I'll create between three and six unique speed sculpts per character. Once I have my rough sculpts, I'll move into Photoshop to further explore and evolve the character. Many environment concept artists will employ a similar technique using Maya or SketchUp. These 3D assets act as a solid foundation for perspective and lighting.

Here's a set of thumbnails I created using this process. I created two speed sculpts and used them as a foundation for my paintings.



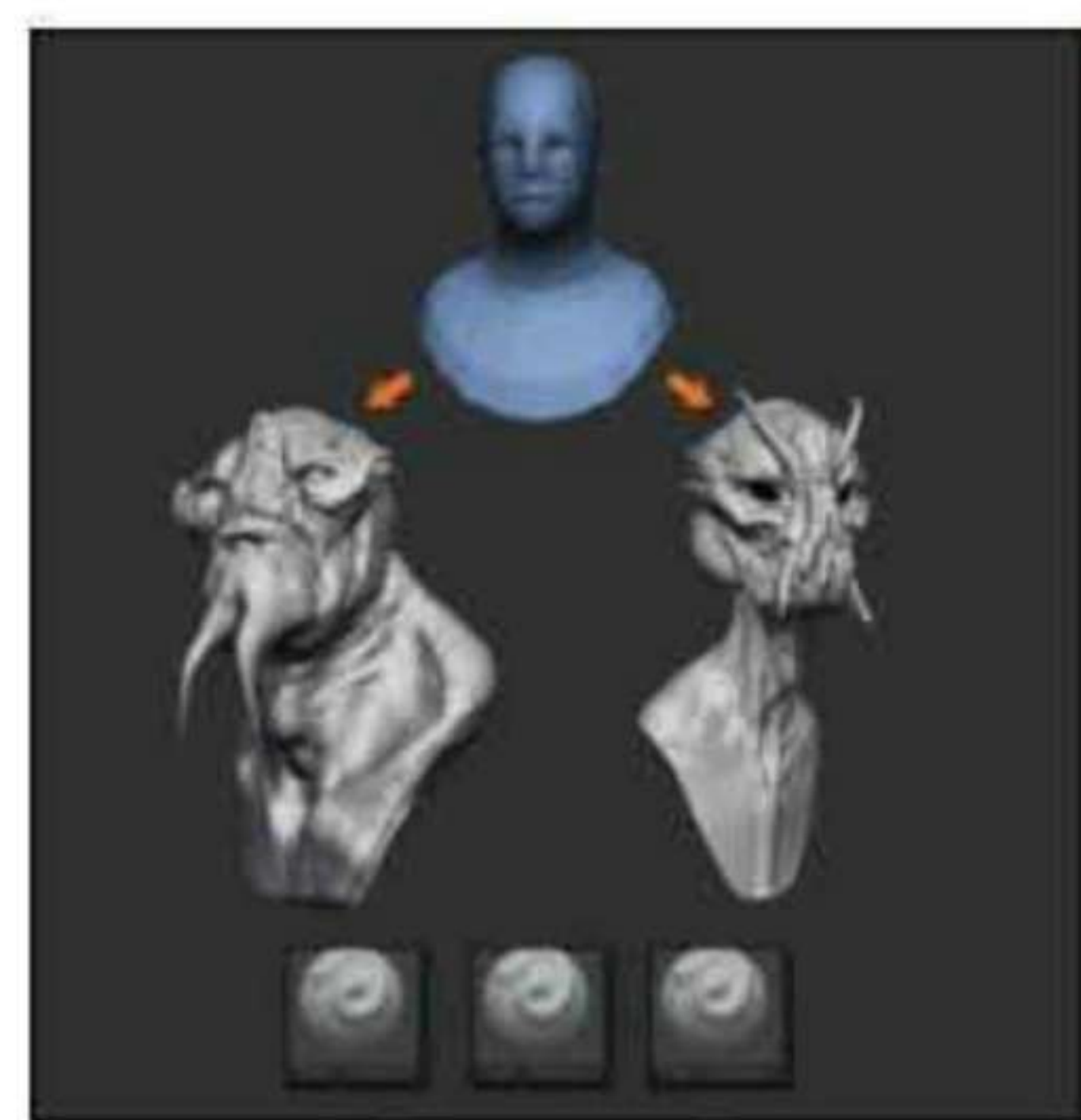
Artist's secret

SCULPTING SIMPLE

starting sculpting at a low subdivision level. Use the move brush to change the silhouette of your character. Continue to work at lower levels as you create more complex forms and shapes. You need a strong foundation before you can move onto details.



Step-by-step: Create a creature using ZBrush speed sculpts



1 Starting from a simple mesh I start to rough the character's shapes out. I use the Move, Dam Standard and Clay build-up brushes to create my planes and forms. At this point I'm focusing on creating a strong foundation. I'm thinking of the structure of the skull and simple shapes of my character. I try not to spend more than one hour on each speed sculpt.



2 Using the Best Preview Render function I can create a simple render in ZBrush. I then export this image as a PSD file into Photoshop. I duplicate the image and lay it out multiple times. These images will act as my foundation for each thumbnail. Most of the time I will create between two to three speed sculpts to explore different design options.



3 I start by using the Transform, Warp, and Liquify tools in Photoshop. I use them to change and push the silhouette of each speed sculpt. This is an incredibly fast way to create some new variations. Don't be afraid to alter the speed sculpt - after all, these are just guides to where you want to take the final creature design. Feel free to explore all your design paths.



4 Using a simple brush and sampling colours from the sculpt, I begin to paint over my character. I start with the eyes to try and capture the feeling for each character. I use the speed sculpt to my advantage to explore the creature's design and use my painting skills to take the character to the next level. At this point I sometimes even experiment with hair and skin textures in my thumbnails.

Your questions answered...

Question

What's the best way to paint patterned, tiger-like fur?

Lola Pensak, Poland



Detailing fur not only adds character to your creature, but also anchors it in real-world rules. Hunting animals in particular will use patterned fur for camouflage.

Answer

Brynn replies



Painting striped fur can add some great personality to a creature or animal. Patterns can add history and evolution to your design that can make your creature feel grounded in reality. With a few layers in Photoshop, you can create a striped pattern to add some dimension to your creature.

For my Striped Gnoll, I started with a line drawing. As I begin to finish up with colour, I block in the basic shape of the fur with my brush. I begin to make my strokes smaller and more precise; I usually work from light to dark. Once I've laid in my basic fur strokes I create a Multiply layer. I choose a colour within the illustration, adjust it to where I want it and then begin to lightly paint in stripes.

The key to making it look like the fur is striped is to then paint over



As you can see here, the highlights and shadow emphasise the stripes being part of the fur. You can also see the basic shapes and the smaller strokes added in on top for definition.

your fur and stripe layers with translucent shadow layers and opaque highlights. This will make it seem as though the fur itself is striped and it will sit under your highlight layer nicely. It never hurts to look at the real thing, either!

Question

How can I quickly design creature concepts?

Cindy Pincus, US

Answer

Mark replies



The mirroring technique is a great way for coming up with interesting designs quickly,

particularly in regards to faces or complicated creatures laden with tedious horns, scales, complex patterns and other elements.

My painting here is a pretty basic portrait of a creature that's mirrored almost identically on both sides. Because true symmetry doesn't happen in nature, this makes him seem that little bit more unearthly and alien. Usually I try to break up the symmetry to keep things looking more natural, but with concepts like this it can benefit the overall design. It's also a great way of roughing out a design to paint over later. Scribbling out a rough shape and then mirroring it can reveal other interesting shapes or



Both sides of this image are almost identical, making the creature look odd.

the silhouette of a creature you didn't previously see.

Although this technique shouldn't be used for everything, it's ideal for coming up with designs quickly. You could always take the design and develop it further in a different, non-symmetrical pose.

Question

How do I paint translucent, frog-like webbing between fingers?

Julia McDonald, Canada

Answer

Daarken replies



The trick with painting transparent objects, like cloth or skin, is to indicate objects behind them but also show areas that are opaque. Folds are often places where you can be more opaque. Furthermore, backlighting an object can help show that it is translucent because you can show the light shining through the object.

Remember when you were a child and you shined a torch in your mouth and made your cheeks really orange or red? Or held a torch up to your fingers? That's just the same principle.

Another way to show translucency is by adding in veins and arteries. Skin is pretty translucent and the colour of skin is determined, in part, by what is under it. In certain areas where the skin is thinner or where there are

more veins present, the skin will have a bluish tint. I'd avoid painting something completely opaque and then just lowering the opacity on the layer because it typically doesn't look right and you'll have to go back and make changes anyway.

I try to show translucency by backlighting the hand and having light shine through the webbing in certain places. I also paint what's behind the webbing. You can see the palm behind the webbing.



Question

I want to paint a pack of rabid rats?
What's the best way of going about this?

Carly Fossey, US



As you move into the background, the level of detail is reduced and the colours become less saturated. Silhouettes work well and the brain fills in the rest.

Instead of beady black sparkly eyes that most rats have, I changed my rats' eyes to dead-looking, pupil-less ones. This instantly changes the feel of a creature from normal to weird and dangerous.

Answer



Manon replies
For this collection of infected rodents I start off by looking at some photo references of rats that I find online, but to be honest they all look far too cute. I wanted this lot to be baying for blood and suitably manic, so I decided to ditch any realism and go for a cartoon, humorous feel with a suitably gross undercurrent.

Rabies is an incredibly unpleasant condition that will cause any animal who has it to become hostile to anything or anyone who approaches it. The classic symptoms are foaming at the mouth and savage attacks.

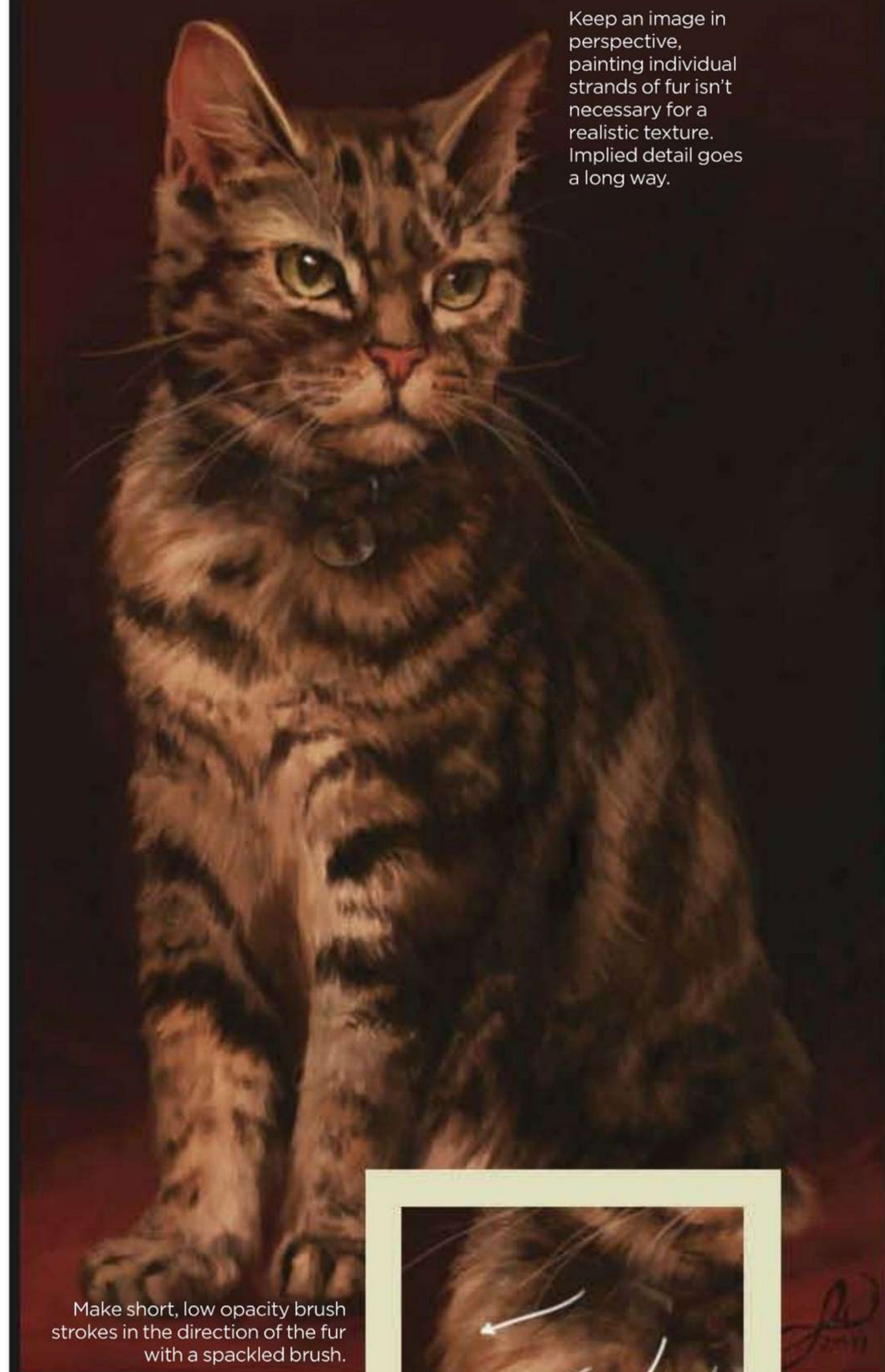
Loosely, I sketch out my nasty gnashing furballs first in Photoshop before applying full colour. I choose to have them scampering at the full moon for the bright rim-lighting and spooky colour palette that it inevitably achieves.

When I finally add the foaming mouths, I used a Hard Edged brush at a very low opacity and slowly build up highlights layer by layer. I start with the basic shape of the foam first, then on each layer I add more highlights with a higher opacity. I finish off my rats' rabid drool with sharp small dots of white through the foam to make it look wet.

Question

How do I paint short, soft fur, like that of a cat?

Nicolle Ross, England



Keep an image in perspective, painting individual strands of fur isn't necessary for a realistic texture. Implied detail goes a long way.

Make short, low opacity brush strokes in the direction of the fur with a spackled brush.

Answer



Lauren replies
Brushstrokes often get lost in digital paintings, but fur is one area where visible brushstrokes can make the job much easier. Much like human hair, it's not necessary to paint every strand of fur to create a soft, fur-like texture. Instead, focus on the colours, shading and brush direction.

Fur doesn't go one way on an animal; it reacts and curves to their form. Conveying this directionality is key when painting short fur. Not only does it add realism, but it'll also save yourself a lot of time if you go in using a brush that simulates fur.

For this kind of work, any kind of spackled brush is ideal. A spackled brush is a custom brush made up of several dots, with low spacing so that a brushstroke creates several gentle overlapping lines. They're ideal for fur because when used at a low opacity with short strokes, you can create a soft, textured blend that closely mimics fur. Finish it off with a few sparse highlights and shadows and you'll have believable fur with none of the headache of painting individual strands.

Next month
ON SALE: **26 July**
Master varied edges
and contours using
Photoshop

Question

How can I get the look of watercolour, digitally?

Riley Kerrigan, New Zealand

Using a combination of various layer modes and soft, natural-looking brushes helps to achieve a natural watercolour look digitally.

Answer

Mark replies



Photoshop's layer modes are a big part of my painting process, especially when certain areas of my work need a little boost in colour vibrancy or contrast. The main ones I use are Multiply, Color and Overlay. The other modes have their uses, but unless I'm experimenting I stick with these three.

I use Multiply to darken areas and for blocking in shadows. I mainly use Color to change or alter the hue of an area to add subtle colour variety or even skin patterns. And Overlay is perfect for boosting contrast and enhancing vibrancy, like on the fish's fins in the image here. When combined

these layer modes act almost like ink or watercolour washes, building up the colours gradually and painting over the top of them with Normal layers. Having subtle flecks of colour showing through here and there adds depth to the colours.

Deciding when and where to use these modes can be tricky, so experiment to find what you like about each mode. You'll quickly be using them to great effect. You can simply use these layer modes right at the end of a painting to touch up the

Softly building up the Overlay layers creates a smooth transition in colour on the tail fin. This also helps to give it an almost translucent look.

colours, or you could use them right from the beginning and go wild with them. For me, I like to hover somewhere in the middle: overusing them can come off as a little too much and I like my artwork to seem as natural looking as possible.

Step-by-step: Use layer modes to give a fish that watercolour look

1 After painting in the main shapes and some basic lighting, I decide the main body of the fish should be a bluish silver colour, and the fins a bright orange and yellow. So here I keep most of the base colours pretty muted, knowing they'll be the 'middle' tones that I'll build upon later with different kinds of layers.



2 Here I use a light blue colour on a Multiply layer, almost like an ink wash. As well as adding in some of the detail work, I use some Overlay layers on the orange and blue fins to bring out the colours more. I'm also making sure that each section of the fish is clearly differentiated by colour and texture.



3 Onto the final stretch. Here I use more Overlay layers to brighten up the fins as well as adding some colour variation on the tail. A little greenish yellow is added in places using a Color layer just to add some variation. At this point I add the final details and give him some white highlights to help sell the slippery wet look.



Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**

The art of TERRYL WHITLATCH

Detailed, accurate and highly imaginative – this amazing creature designer uses science to support the suspension of disbelief





licking through Terryl Whitlatch's latest book, *Animals Real and Imagined*, you'd be forgiven for thinking that it's a biological text – even

when you're in the sections depicting her invented creatures. So vivid is her pencil work, and so accurate are her anatomical renderings, that it doesn't only seem possible that a 'questing beast' has just

sneaked behind the shed at the bottom of the garden, it's probably got tufts of fur stuck to its lips after devouring the cat.

"When I design creatures, I want you to be able to imagine that this animal could really exist, even though it doesn't, and I try and put in just enough interesting anatomical structures that we can read it and relate to it without it being so much that we're confused by them," she says. "So, I just kind of get into the naturalism of it and try to imbue imaginary creatures ➔

SURF 'N' TURF

Terryl's book *The Katurran Odyssey* features creatures of the land and sea. She mainly works in pencil and pen, but in this case the entire book was coloured up digitally.



OBSERVATION

“Look and observe animals. Go to the zoo, study your pets, read about animals. Study anatomy. You can never get enough anatomy. It’s like studying the piano. Take Mozart. Even though he was a natural-born talent, unless he practised the piano and wrote music every day, he wouldn’t have written what he did.”

➡ and plants with what I see in the world around me."

If that's her mission, then it's been a successful one. Terryl has designed stunning creatures for some of the biggest movie projects of the past two decades. She was a key concept artist on Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace, helping bring to life characters like Jar Jar Binks, his fellow Gungans, the podracers and the

array of wildlife and monsters seen in Episodes I, II and III. She's also worked on *Dragonheart*, a CGI interpretation of Beowulf, and *Jumanji*. Terryll has even illustrated a book entitled *The Wildlife of Star Wars: A Field Guide*.

ANIMAL MAGIC

Part of Terryl's great success working with Lucasfilm, ILM, Pixar and Disney can be attributed to her academic background. She started observing animals at an early age because her father was a biology teacher. Growing up she and her sister were surrounded by all sorts of fauna – both living and preserved. Her grandfather had a ranch, and some of her earliest memories include meeting her grandparents' horses, and their Boston bull terrier. At



16 she decided she wanted to be a biological illustrator, and went on to study vertebrate zoology at Sonoma State University, before attending the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

"The inherent design in all living creatures – plants and animals and inert matter like minerals and rocks – it's just so fascinating because of all the design that's involved, both in what we see, and how the organs and internal systems work," says Terryl. "There's just enough added to everything to make it lovely, or at least

THE KATURRAN ODYSSEY

This is the title spread from Terry's book of the same name. The scene features extinct moa birds and parakeets.

interesting or funny looking, and not too much that you can't read what it is."

When Terryl designs a creature, she might be tied to an art director's brief. However, when she's got blue sky freedom, as with Episode I, she pulls in various forms and adaptations from real-world animals that work with the personality of the creature, its biological niche, or both. Jar Jar Binks, for instance, used elements from duck-billed dinosaurs, emus and parrot fish, while the podracer Sebulba's grumpy arrogance is pure camel.

"You play around with different proportions – an animal that has longer legs or shorter legs, a shorter tail, a longer tail, a big head, small head, big body, skinny body. In the back of my mind there's always some real animal that's inspiring a creature. I take that and I kind of morph it around and push and pull and play around with the anatomy that way," Terryl says.

There are great examples of this approach in *Animals Real and Imagined*. The questing beast (which ate the cat) appears to combine leopard, goat, snake and



Terryl Whitlatch

VITAL STATISTICS

"I want you to think this animal could really exist"

Year of birth

1960.

Place of birth

Oakland, California.

Current location

Northern California.

Favourite artists

Bob Kuhn, Jay Matternes, William D Berry, Paul Bransom.

Last book you read

DK Smithsonian Natural History.

Favourite animal

The Grevy's - or imperial - zebra. My favourite animals are horses, and the Grevy's zebra is in my opinion, the most spectacular in terms of colour and design of the wild equines.

Place you most want to visit

These five seem to be equal with me: the Lake District in Northern England to see Hill



Top, Beatrix Potter's home; pony trekking across France; the Serengeti plain during migration time in Africa; Australia and Australian zoos, to see the

most bizarre animals; the Greek Isles and those glorious blue oceans and the white homes on the cliffs, plus the antiquity of it all.

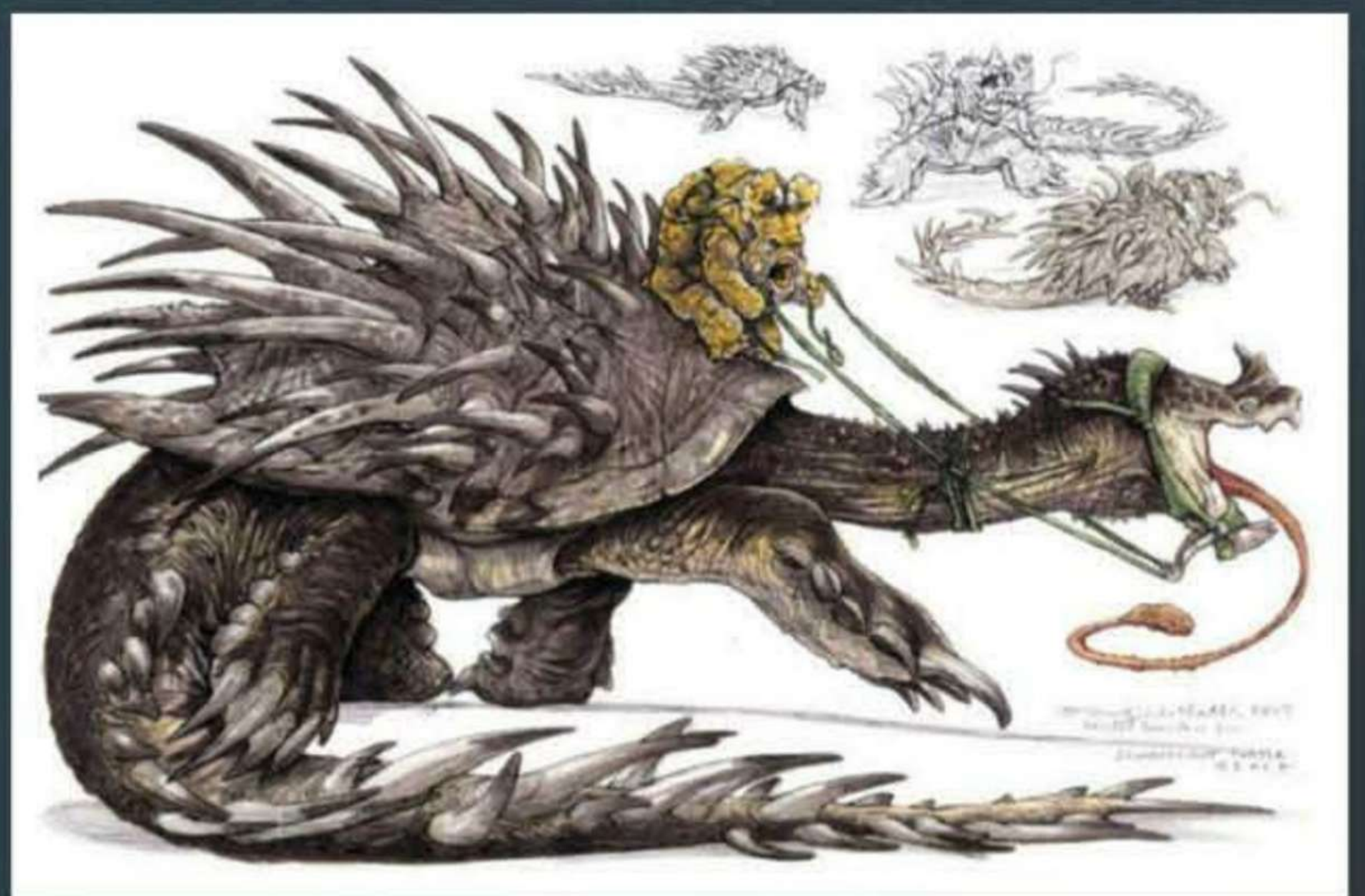
Interesting desk item

Realistic toy dinosaur – a Cryolophosaurus by the manufacturer Carnegie.

Story that you most want to illustrate

I'd love to illustrate a tome of Aesop's fables, or African and/or Native American animal stories. Also, Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*, and the complete *Jungle Books*. I can't decide!

“I take a real animal and morph it around, pushing, pulling and playing around with the anatomy”



THE DERBY

This creature's fittingly called a *Juggerchelonid* and mounted upon it is a *Drone-Ogre*. From Terryl's book *Animals Real and Imagined*.

ANIMAL MAGIC

A spread from the *Katurran Odyssey*, a book based on the adventures of talking animals, which included a lemur and the extinct quagga as main characters.



➡ lemur components. Terryl's goram brings together gorilla, horse and bighorn sheep, and the juggerchelonid crosses a turtle with a spiked dinosaur. Indeed, prehistoric creatures are as important to her as living species, and palaeo-illustration is one of her specialties. Terryl has illustrated real organisms for zoos, museums and scientific publications, as well as the World Wildlife Fund. Each piece of academic work just seems to feed her creativity.

A FANTASY-FILLED CHILDHOOD

Realism isn't the only thing that has brought the artist success. For every ounce of observation she puts into an image, there's an equal measure of imagination. It's clear that fantasy worlds were also a big part of her childhood. Soon Terryl's talking about the voyages of Sinbad, Dr Seuss, Disney's Fantasia and the stories from ancient Greece. She's looked into everything from Norse mythology to Native American lore. "I find the folk tales of whatever race, particularly those with animals, so enchanting and inspiring," she says.



POSTMAN BEWARE

Greek mythology is a theme that Terryl returns to time and again. Here she bases Cerberus, the hound of Hades, on the real-life mastiff breed.



DRAWING AND MEDIA

"Basic, down-to-earth drawing with pencil on paper – you have to do that. Acrylics feature a lot in my paintings, but for a good deal of my career I've been using high-tech markers such as those from Copic because they're just so fast."



UNICORN

Terryl has a passion for horses both real and imaginary, and loves unicorns, Pegasus, as well as creations like her Equine Amphibious Dino-mare.

She storyboarded and illustrated it, working with writer David Wieger and designer Robert Gould to polish it up for print. She has already boarded two sequels, and the idea of turning it into a film has been mooted. But the project took her creativity to a new level in other ways as well.

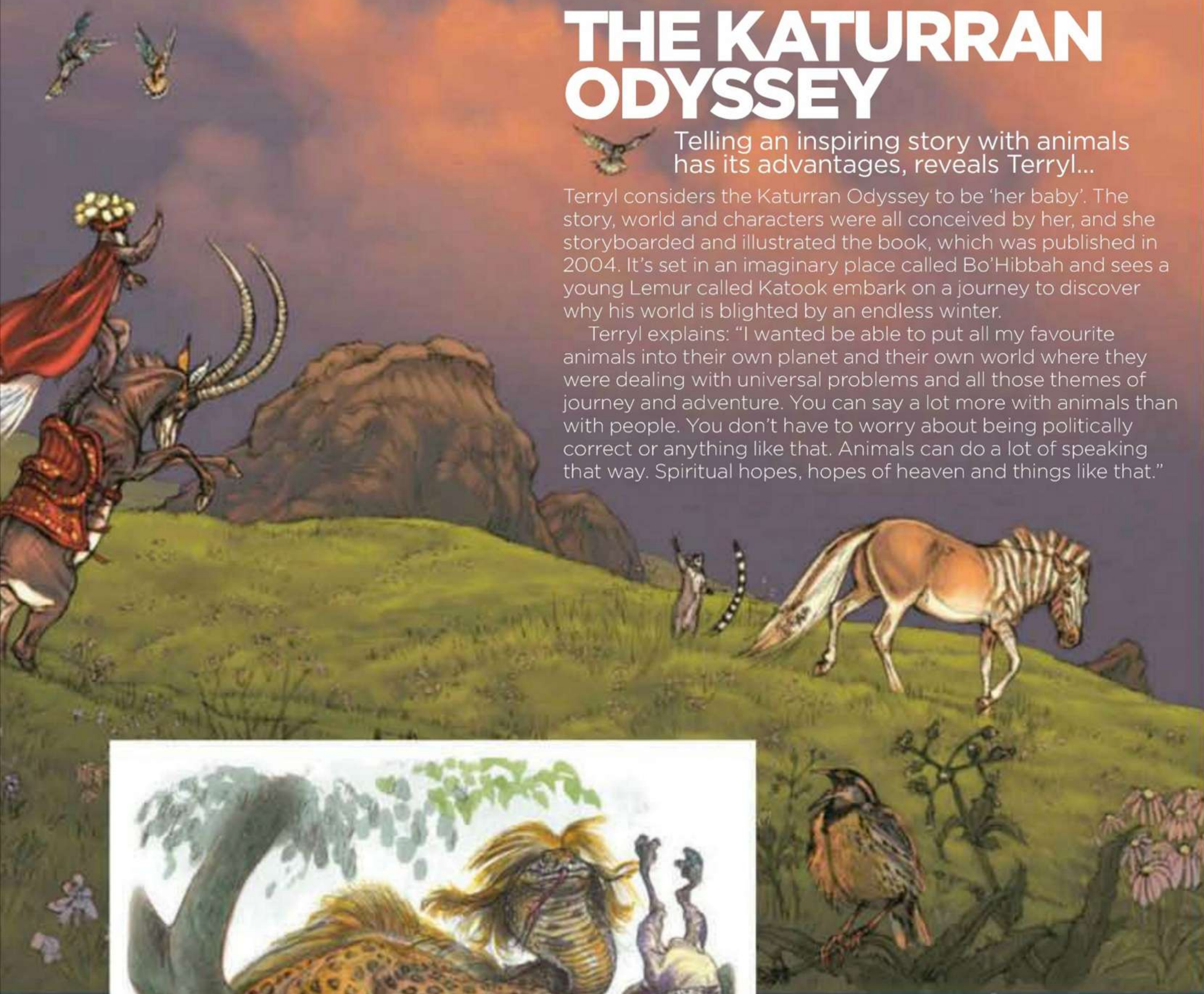
"It gave an insight into what it's like to create worlds, what it was like for George to create Star Wars or, for example, James Cameron and the world of Avatar. It's not

THE KATURRAN ODYSSEY

Telling an inspiring story with animals has its advantages, reveals Terryl...

Terryl considers the Katurran Odyssey to be 'her baby'. The story, world and characters were all conceived by her, and she storyboarded and illustrated the book, which was published in 2004. It's set in an imaginary place called Bo'Hibbah and sees a young Lemur called Katook embark on a journey to discover why his world is blighted by an endless winter.

Terryl explains: "I wanted be able to put all my favourite animals into their own planet and their own world where they were dealing with universal problems and all those themes of journey and adventure. You can say a lot more with animals than with people. You don't have to worry about being politically correct or anything like that. Animals can do a lot of speaking that way. Spiritual hopes, hopes of heaven and things like that."



QUESTING BEAST

This peculiar creature, the Questing Beast, appears to have eaten the Cheshire cat and stolen its perch.

"I find the folk tales of whatever race, particularly those with animals, so enchanting and inspiring"

It's not just the way a culture draws on the natural world, but the entire outlook of its people that interests Terryl. "In the Hellenic age, when they were sculpting these beautiful, very realistic sculptures. Heaven knows that they depicted winged horses and chimeras, and the Romans even more so, but they looked to reality for that," she says. "If we get into the art and legends of the Native Americans, you see a much more symbolic artistry, like the wooden masks that they would use. Or, if we go to the South West with the Hopis and the Pueblos, we see the kachina dolls: basically a very interesting mask-like head on a human body and certain costuming. It's like they're using symbolic imagery to represent spiritual truths."

Spiritual truth is something Terryl has thought about a great deal, and is a theme of her 2004 book, the Katurran Odyssey.

just, 'Let's do a little story.' When you create a world you create such an involved thing. There's the world itself, the physical world, the physical laws, the different types of species that live there, and then the tensions between the species. There's politics, there's trade – it goes on and on," she says.

Currently, Terryl's teaching creature design and animal anatomy at the Academy of Art University, and she continues with both her own projects and Hollywood productions. She's been working for Lucasfilm, and on Disney's adaptation of the Philip K Dick story King of the Elves, which is still deep in production. And she continues to feel inspired by Native American stories. "I like the animal stories of the Seneca," she says. "The Ghost of the Great White Stag is my favourite, and I would like to not only illustrate it, but to see an animated movie made out of it."

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Back issues

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Issue 67 March 2011



Adam Hughes's glorious Catwoman cover heralds a comic book special this month, as we look at Bill Sienkiewicz's groundbreaking art, DC's iconic covers and Jim Lee's sketchbook. This edition is now only available digitally – buy it at zinio.com/imaginefx-single.

Issue 68 April 2011



Discover how to use perspective in your art, create traditional-looking images and inject a feeling of real action into detailed battle scenes. We also chat to concept artist Joel Chang, whose work appears in the fantastic film Sucker Punch, the inspiration behind this issue.

Issue 69 May 2011



An epic new size, an epic poster and some of the art world's greatest legends giving you advice on creating epic landscapes – did we mention the theme was epic? We also talk to Dylan Cole, the matte painter and concept artist who worked on a small art-house film called Avatar...

Issue 70 June 2011



Andrew Jones, James Gurney and Marta Dahlig are just three of the artists who share the secrets behind their distinctive art, while top art directors reveal what they look for in a portfolio – get yourself on the fast track to that dream job! And a reader receives one-to-one tuition in Art Class!



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Sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

Michael Stewart



Michael is a freelance artist who attended the Gnomon School of Visual Effects, after which he had his first piece of work published in

Grim Crew's zombie comic book anthology *Dead Future*. He's busy working on his creator-owned project *Shadow Ops*, a comic book that's as mysterious as it sounds. We look forward to seeing the finished article. michaelstewartart.blogspot.com

Michael Stewart

Inspired by classic barbarian babes and mysterious men folk, Michael Stewart's sketchbook is a refreshing blast

ASSASSIN LADY

"A very quick sketch of a character that I worked on for another comic book project. I like to maintain a certain rhythm in my drawings by utilising shadows."

GIGER GIRL

"This is essentially an HR Giger-inspired character. She's very similar to comic book heroes like *The Darkness* and *Witchblade*. The way I drew the skull behind her is what really makes this piece a killer. I ensured he has a devious smile on his face... er, skull."



FACE SKETCHES

"Some very rough and rudimentary faces. This is also another type of practical exercise that I like to do. I just imagine the most wacky and the coolest-looking facial expressions that I can, and then sketch them out."

"I just imagine the most wacky and the coolest-looking facial expressions that I can, and then sketch them out"

**FAIRY
DEVIL GIRL, DAMIA**

"This is a character I'm developing for an upcoming comic book. She's half devil and half fairy. To really sell an idea or character you have to get the viewer's attention first, then keep it long enough to have them wanting more. You can almost feel the flesh from these characters."

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Sketchbook

CAVE GIRL

"This was done as a gift for someone. They really love dinosaurs and hot babes so I put 'em both in the drawing! Raquel Welch is still the most epic cave babe ever!"

ARCHER

"A quick sketch of a sexy archer. I keep in mind connecting points and shadows when doing foreshortening. Pure fun!"

HOLDING HER

"Castal is a nymph whose faction is in conflict with Damia's devil clan. Having characters convey emotion is do or die. I typically use a 2H graphite pencil to quickly lay in the structural lines, and then I wipe it out with a kneaded eraser. Next I do the final rendering with a softer grade of graphite, usually F or B."

SORCERESS

"Ureka's an evil sorceress who traps men's souls into her living tree of Magin. I was exploring the possibility of a villainess who tricks men and uses them for some nefarious agenda."

ELF GIRL

"I almost always draw the face of a character first before anything else. That way, you already have a sort of reference for what you want to convey in the first place."

FIGURES

"I love to always do some quick sketches of figures. It helps to keep me fresh and it's a great way to fill up tons of sketchbooks!"

Want to share your sketches? Or know an artist you'd like to see featured in Sketchbook? Then drop us an email at sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your sketches at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.

CYBERMAN 2 After a friend challenged him to redesign Dr Who's Cyberman, Paul jumped at the idea. "I'm not sure if we'll see bio-mechanical machines this extreme on a BBC programme, but fingers crossed." [Close](#)



“It’s all about blending spiritual thinking with the man-machine and the aesthetic of body horror”

Paul

PAUL GERRARD

The Battle: Los Angeles creature designer reveals how conflict can create unusual beauty in the most unlikely of subjects...

There's conflict at the heart of Paul Gerrard's paintings. His 'fusion art' brings competing forms and textures together to create detailed, unique and totally alien creatures. There's more discord at the heart of the artist's process, too. As a gallery artist who found work creating concepts for video games, the Liverpoolian's background as a traditional oils and acrylics painter ensured he was a participant in the early argument of traditional versus digital.

"I got caught up in the old traditional versus digital dilemma for a long time, stemming from preconceived ideas of how we react to what is and isn't art," says Paul as he remembers his first flirtations with digital art in the early 1990s. "I came to the conclusion that it doesn't matter what medium you use or what software you use – art comes from within. It's the ideas, the concept and the emotional connection to the visual that are the vital components to the art process."

Despite embracing digital art, Paul still finds himself fighting the medium. His years of working as a gallery artist, with shows in New York and Germany, meant he struggled early on to adjust. Producing daily concepts for art directors, particularly in the early days in the video games industry, forced him to take stock. "I wanted the concept to be near the same quality and detail as the gallery work, which took weeks," says Paul. "So I learnt to adapt my style and reduced the resolution significantly, so that the art process was the same. The technical side was the only thing affected."

His gallery work was about conveying a mood, pulling the viewer in and giving them a glimpse at something that they can't easily explain but feel compelled to look further into. "It was vital I retained that in the concept art," says Paul. "I work very long hours to achieve what I want in the time given, but to me it's worth it."

Using and embracing such conflicts has led Paul to define his own style, both digitally and traditionally. His work fuses organic and mechanical forms. Paul plays on ideas formed by artists such as H.R. Giger and Francis Bacon, painting contorted, dreamlike visions of alien creatures and monsters melded by conflicting parts. These are layered and worked over until new shapes and life-forms emerge.

DETAIL IS EVERYTHING

"It's probably an obsession with detail," says Paul as he explains his process of working on small chunks of his paintings one at a time, spending hours focusing on sections to build up the detail and experimenting with Overlay layers of dust, dirt and grime. "I layer details from photographic images before painting into them, or do the reverse: paint the detail and then add overlays to bring out the details. It all depends on the finish that I'm after."

That 'finish' for the movie Battle: Los Angeles meant delivering a balance between familiarity and surprise when it came to designing the film's alien creatures. By purposefully retaining the familiar 'Grey' shape of a human body and round head, Paul's designs "help

Artist PROFILE

Paul Gerard



COUNTRY: England

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:

Francis Bacon,

John Martin,

Gustave Doré,

Melvyn Grant

SOFTWARE USED:

Photoshop

WEB: gerrardart.com



HEAD 7 Paul kept his foes for Battle: Los Angeles rooted in familiar shapes and ideas by evolving the look of the classic Grey alien.

Close

Gallery





SWAMP THINGS

The Legend of Oak Swamp is Paul's next movie project...

The film follows the trials of two teenagers who discover bloodthirsty beasts, engineered by World War II military scientists, roaming their hometown woods. "Which is where I come in," says Paul. "The fundamental core of the creature designs is DNA splicing, merging different species of animals to create another. From a visual point the emphasis was maintaining a natural look to the creatures while still messing with Mother Nature."

These creature designs need strong personalities to work and include weird mixtures of animal parts. One creature combines the power and size of a hippo with the speed and cunning of a crocodile. While Paul's designs suggest the movie will be effects heavy, director Jed Burdick says, "VFX doesn't drive our story... story drives our story, yet we'll have some serious visuals to back it up!" The Legend of Oak Swamp is currently in pre-production, but we think it's got legs. Lots of legs.

Comments



Ian Dean
ImagineFX

"It takes a brave artist to mix hippos and crocodiles, bats and pumas, but Paul manages it with subtly and realism. I certainly wouldn't want to meet one of these creatures in the dark woods – or any kind of woods, come to think of it."



Dave Kendall
Pro artist

"I would have loved to have seen Paul's Cybermen crawling across the screen, but I fear the sofa I'd need to hide behind would have been monstrous in its own right. Even the normally unflappable Dr Who would have nightmares."



Axel Bernal
IFX reader

"Paul's art works on a subconscious level, riding the frontier between dreams and nightmares. His characters have the weathered texture of driftwood, and the same haunting quality of suggesting different forms."



SPIRIT OF PARIS Paul took part in a relaxation technique that "got me thinking about the fusion of organic matter, bark and bone. The line between what is flesh and what can become flesh." [Close](#)

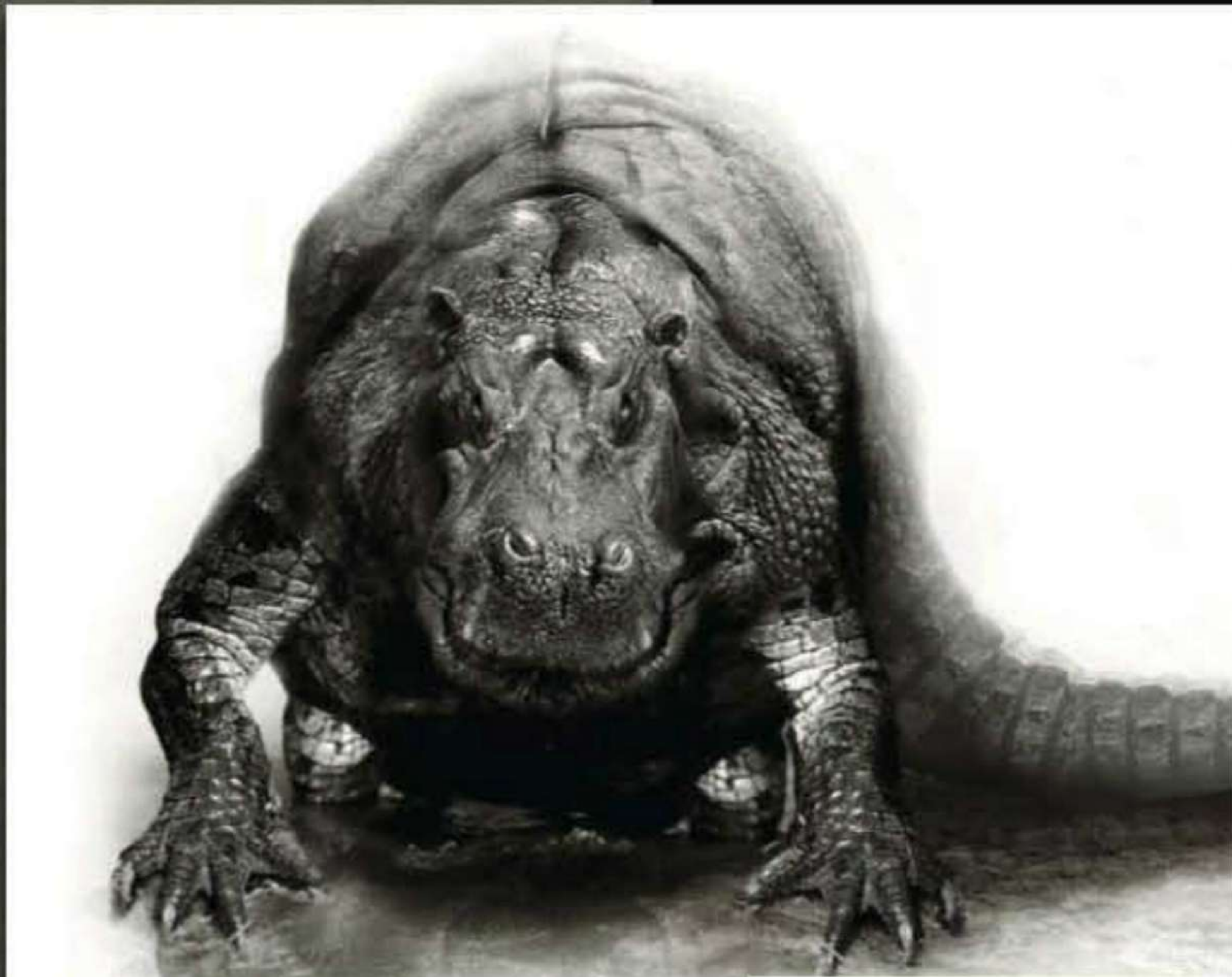


CC_WILLOW Paul never planned on working in the film industry, preferring to pursue a career as a gallery artist, but then the offers came in. "Now I'm lucky enough to do it full-time." [Close](#)

PAUL GERRARD



PROCREATORS "Having a solid understanding of lights and darks, and mood is vital to any image." [Close](#)



HIPPODILE Just one of the bizarre mutant creatures that Paul's drawn for the upcoming film *The Legend of Oak Swamp*. [Close](#)

➡ maintain fear when there's something to familiarise with".

Going a step further, Paul explains how a creature design must reference the real world. "It has to move and feel right. I imagine I'm the creature, and I try to give it a real-world perspective before I add the unreal visual elements," he says. "In nature everything is purpose-built, evolved for a purpose. I like to start rooted and work from there."

A BEAUTIFUL FUSION

For *Battle: Los Angeles* that meant studying and referencing sea creatures and deep-sea life. The shapes and movement of his creatures were rooted in nature and then taken to an extreme state. "I also looked at decaying bone and crumbling machine parts," says Paul. "I never saw the machines and flesh differently, only the purpose of each element. I saw a beautiful fusion of machine and flesh."

Uniquely, Paul worked on the film from the pitch stage through to post-production, affording him a unique insight into the pipeline of a large project. He adapted to the process, got stuck in and achieved results quicker and more efficiently. "When I returned to my personal work it was much looser and organic," says Paul. "It's much easier now to sketch with almost

final details, whereas before I went from nothing to final pieces.

For his personal project, *Dead Links*, a book of 75 paintings depicting grotesque killers and pervers in an alternative universe, Paul's taking his twists on familiarity one step further. "My images are rooted in reality, but completely off the wall," he says explaining how there are no restrictions to his creature designs in *Dead Links*, a self-created universe that exists on another plane of reality, where we're linked to alternate versions of ourselves. Those that have severed their links to our world manifest as warped degenerates. Paul explains that *Dead Links* is "blending spiritual thinking with the man-machine and the aesthetic of body horror".

The artist has committed himself to finishing the project by next year. He's planning to release the book and paintings, along with exploratory sculptures, by Comic-Con 2012. There are also movie projects in the works. Paul is now almost exclusively a digital artist, combining his experiences as a traditional painter with those of a concept artist at the peak of his profession. The conflict now remains firmly in Paul's paintings. "Now when I refer to traditional art, I refer to digital art," he says, adding, "this is now a traditional way of creating art." 🌟



DEAD LINKS This is the title of Paul's new personal project, painting creatures who have broken their 'links' with our universe. [Close](#)

Gallery



Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: LILLY THE LONG WING

Created as part of her graduate show back in 2009, **Polina Hristova** created this huge majestic dragon, drawing on some unusual influences to create a striking creature design...

Artist PROFILE

Polina Hristova



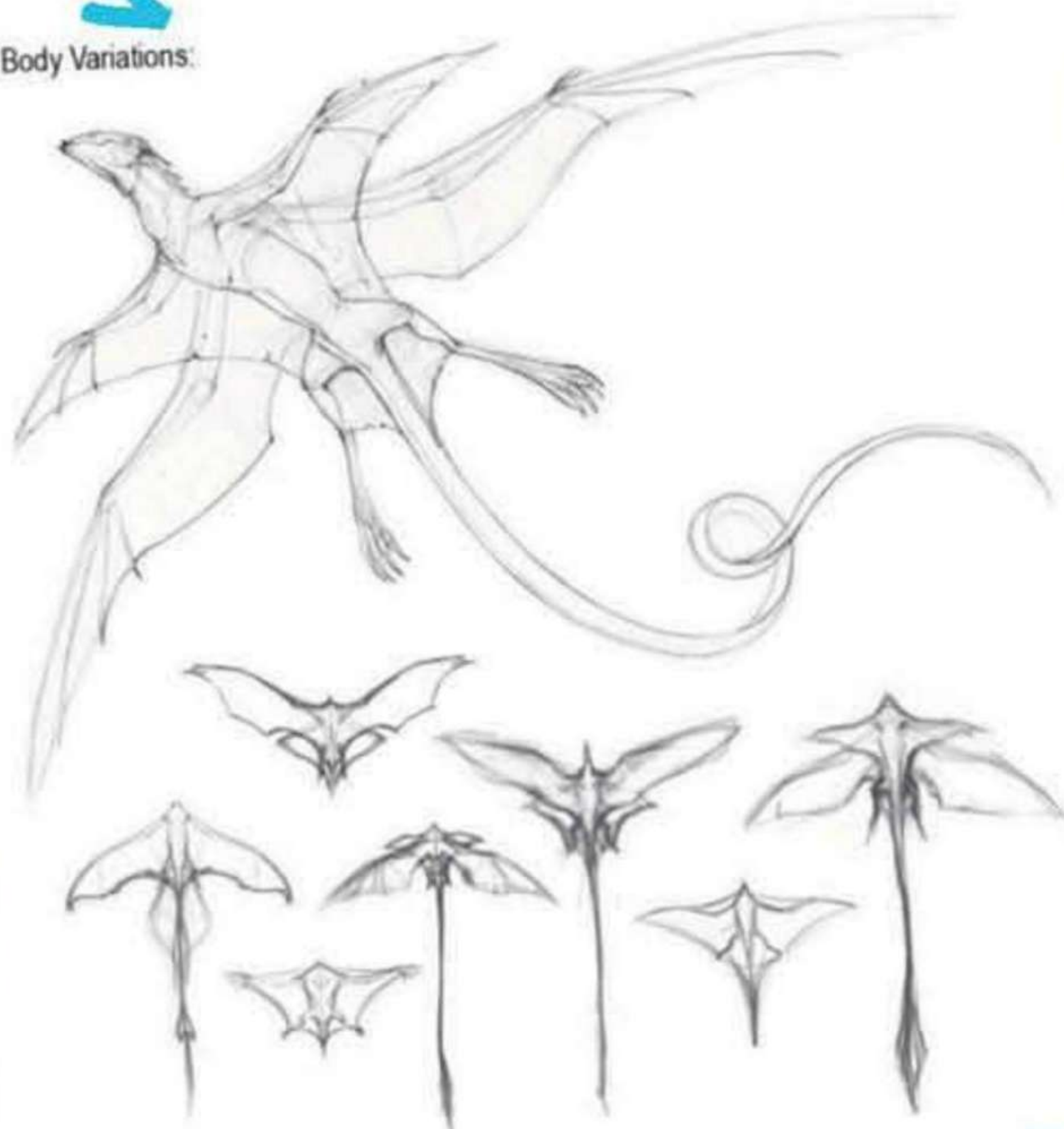
After graduating with a degree in Entertainment Design from the Art Center College of Design in 2009, Polina has successfully made the move into the video games and entertainment industries, working on high-profile projects such as Uncharted 2, PlayStation Move Heroes, and The Clone Wars TV series.

polinadesign.com

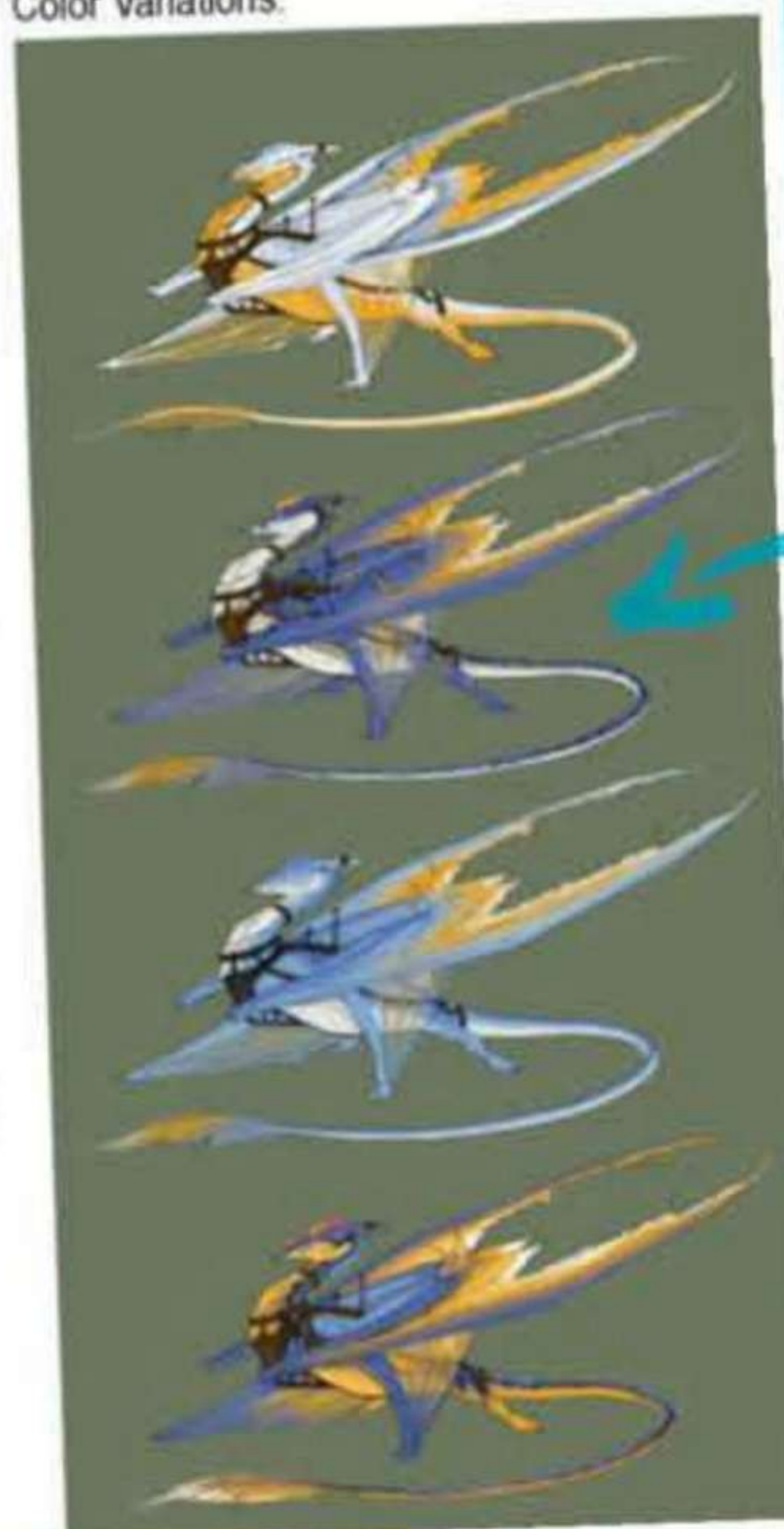
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Sketches In my first set of sketches I focused on making an interesting silhouette. From there I tried a few different poses to make sure the design worked, and a few different head options. Once I was happy I did a final line drawing and moved onto colour.

Body Variations:



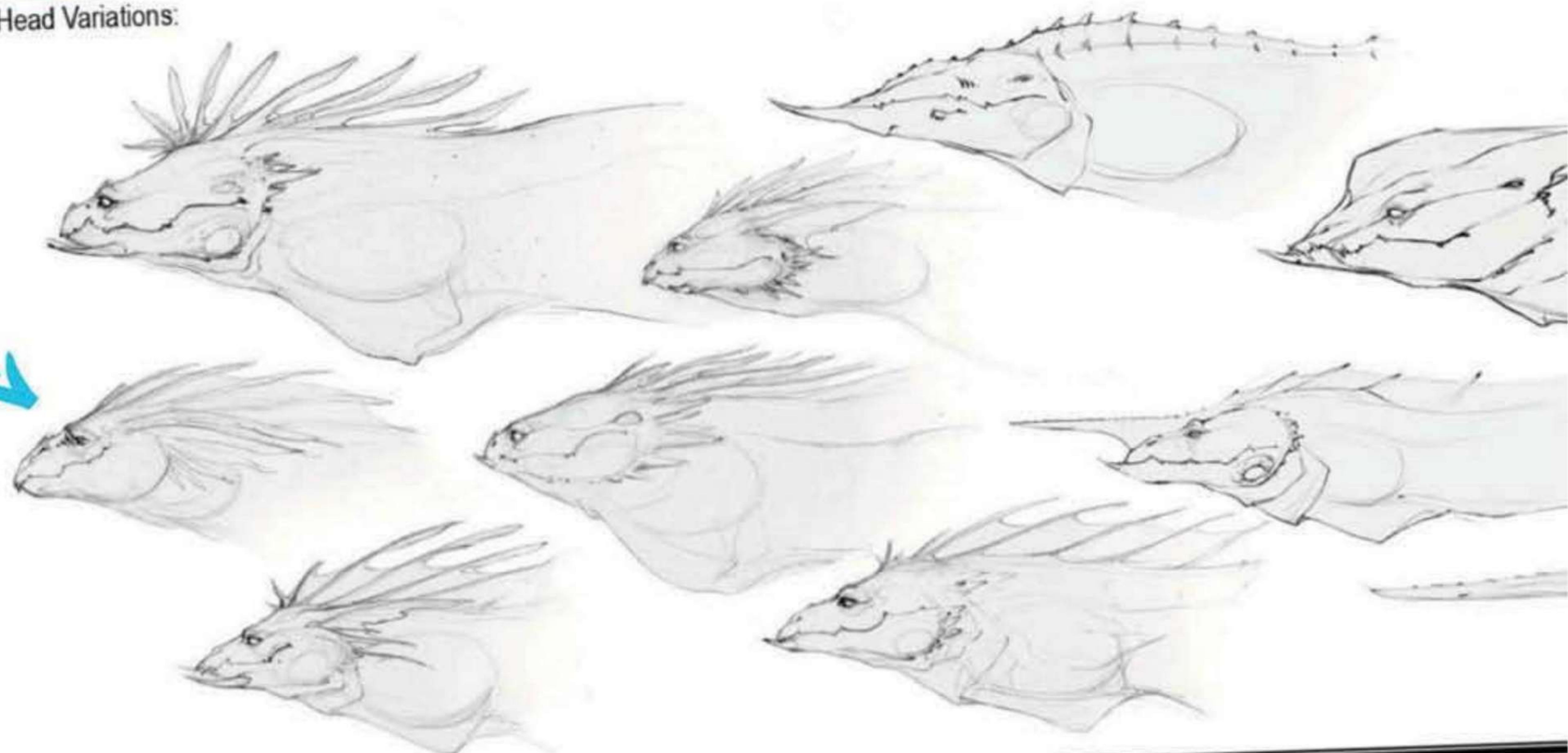
Color Variations:



Colour variations

Normally when I do colour variations I would try options from nearly the entire spectrum. However, Lilly was described as a blue and white dragon with translucent orange wings that look brown when rested against her body, so a colour scheme was already decided for me.

Head Variations:



Story and reference

Every good design starts with a story and a load of references. Lilly's a character from Naomi Novik's His Majesty's Dragon. Now I must admit I didn't follow the description exactly, but I didn't want her to be a typical dragon so I used moths and crocodiles as my primary inspiration.

Development sheet **Lilly the Long Wing**

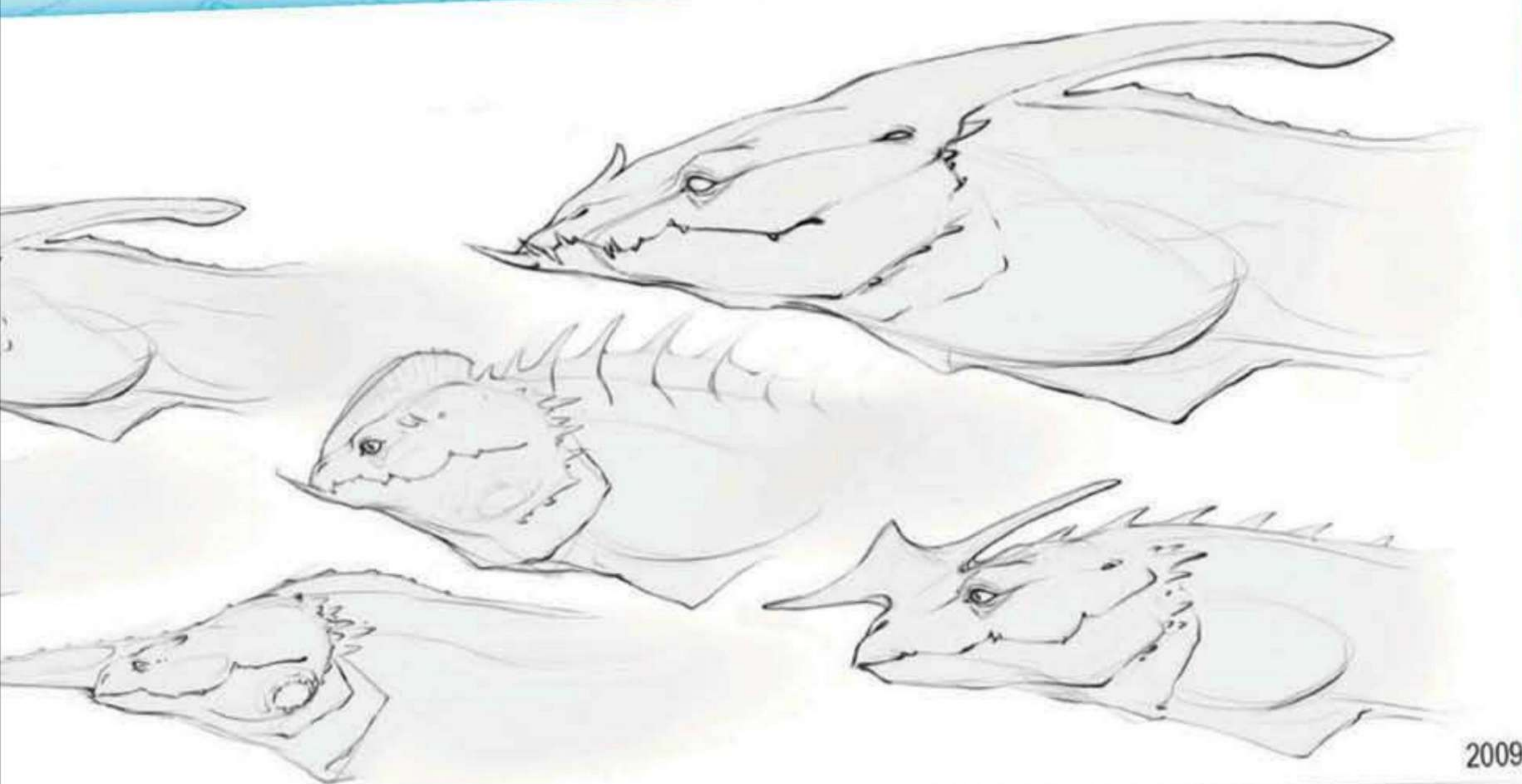
Painting After selecting a colour variation, I blocked in my line drawing and spent the rest of the time painting and applying textures.

Final image Overall I'm pretty happy with how Lilly came out, but if I was to change anything, I'd add some scars and blemishes to her skin, and refine the harness.



Character Design: Lilly the Long Wing

Project: His Majesty's Dragon



2009

SEND US YOUR CONCEPTS!

Are you working on a project, or doodling your own development sketches, that you'd like to share with us?

LET US KNOW! Email your WIPs and final images to: develop@imaginefx.com

TYRIS FLARE

Wes Burt created this stunning marketing image for the Sega video game *Golden Axe: Beast Rider*, depicting the heroine Tyris Flare.



BACK IN BLACK

It was almost called Massive Force. Or Happytown Digital. In fact, Digital Circle Jerk, Pixel Typhoon and the more corporate-sounding New Millennium Workshop were all on the potentials list at one point. But eventually, and with some relief, co-founders and friends Jason Manley, Justin 'Coro' Kaufman, Chris Hatala and Andrew Jones scratched together \$6,000 and set up Massive Black.

The company was born out of frustration; from a lack of creativity in jobs, working up other people's ideas. The fledgling Massive Black team wanted to create a new working culture for like-minded artists, and armed with passion, Wacoms and tequila they proceeded to do just that.



A group of artists have made a big success of their dream company. New President **Chris Hatala** recalls where **Massive Black** came from and where the studio is going...



Downstairs is all business where the team pitch projects, while upstairs the fun takes place as Coro, Kemp, Jason and the other Massive Black artists go to work.

The goals of Massive Black haven't changed since it was founded. It was a chance to "gather together a group of equally motivated and talented artists to do what we all loved doing most: create art and share knowledge to better all our respective mediums," explains new company president Chris Hatala.

FAMILY TIES

Putting his business hat on, Chris reveals the company's core goals have ensured that few people leave Massive Black. What sets this art studio apart is that the core artists who joined at the start, either at the fledgling start-up in San Francisco or at their newer headquarters in the city, have remained together. "This is obviously something that can be viewed as a great business statistic, but it's far more than that for us," says Chris. "Whether you like it or not, when you work with the same group of people for six-plus years, they become family. And just for the record, we like it."

In that time the company has grown. New projects for major film, video game and ad creatives have proved successful. Massive Black's success has expanded to a website and art books as well as global art and design workshop events, which all stem from the studio's culture of positive pressure – a desire to constantly improve and develop art skills.

DO IT YOURSELF

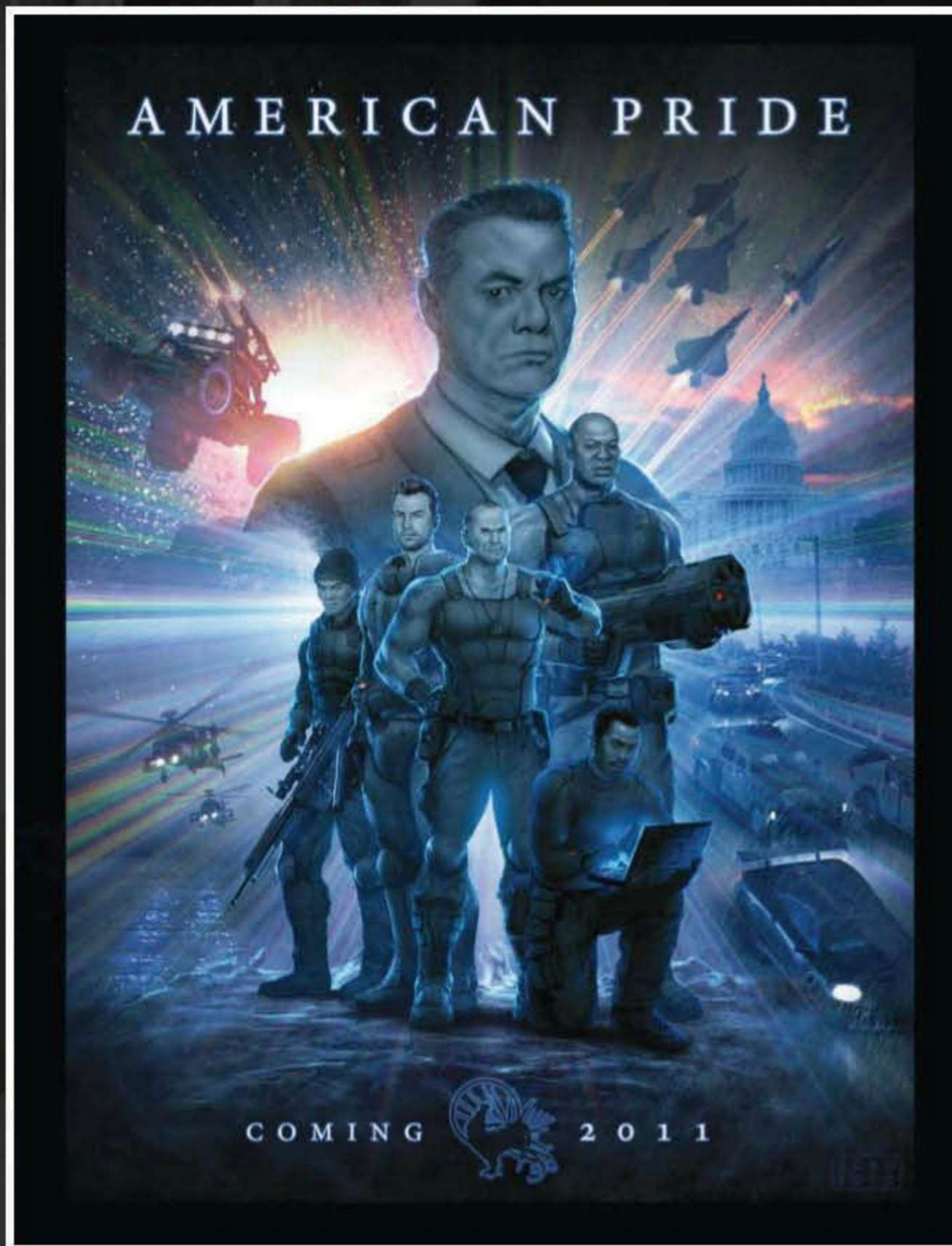
It's a mind-set that's seen Massive Black grow further still. The company has moved offices and is refocusing under new direction from co-founder Chris Hatala. The aim is to grow and promote internally generated intellectual properties (IP) under the Massive Black Entertainment label.

"I think I can speak for our entire crew here in saying that intellectual property is where we'd like to solely plant ourselves in the future. The bevy of great projects and talented teams that we've been lucky enough to work with thus far is an amazing experience that can't be matched, no question about that," says Chris as he explains the company's repositioning. "I certainly feel as though we've all grown to be the artists we are today because of that fact. But there's no equal to creating what drives you personally, so that's where we would like to be someday."

The studio already has three IP projects in the public space, from the game idea Mothhead that's based on the mixed media sculptures of Peter König, to the comic book Transient by co-founder Coro. The challenging aspect of these projects is their time constraints: there's no strict formula for when a new IP is complete. IP can mean a vertical

AMERICAN PRIDE

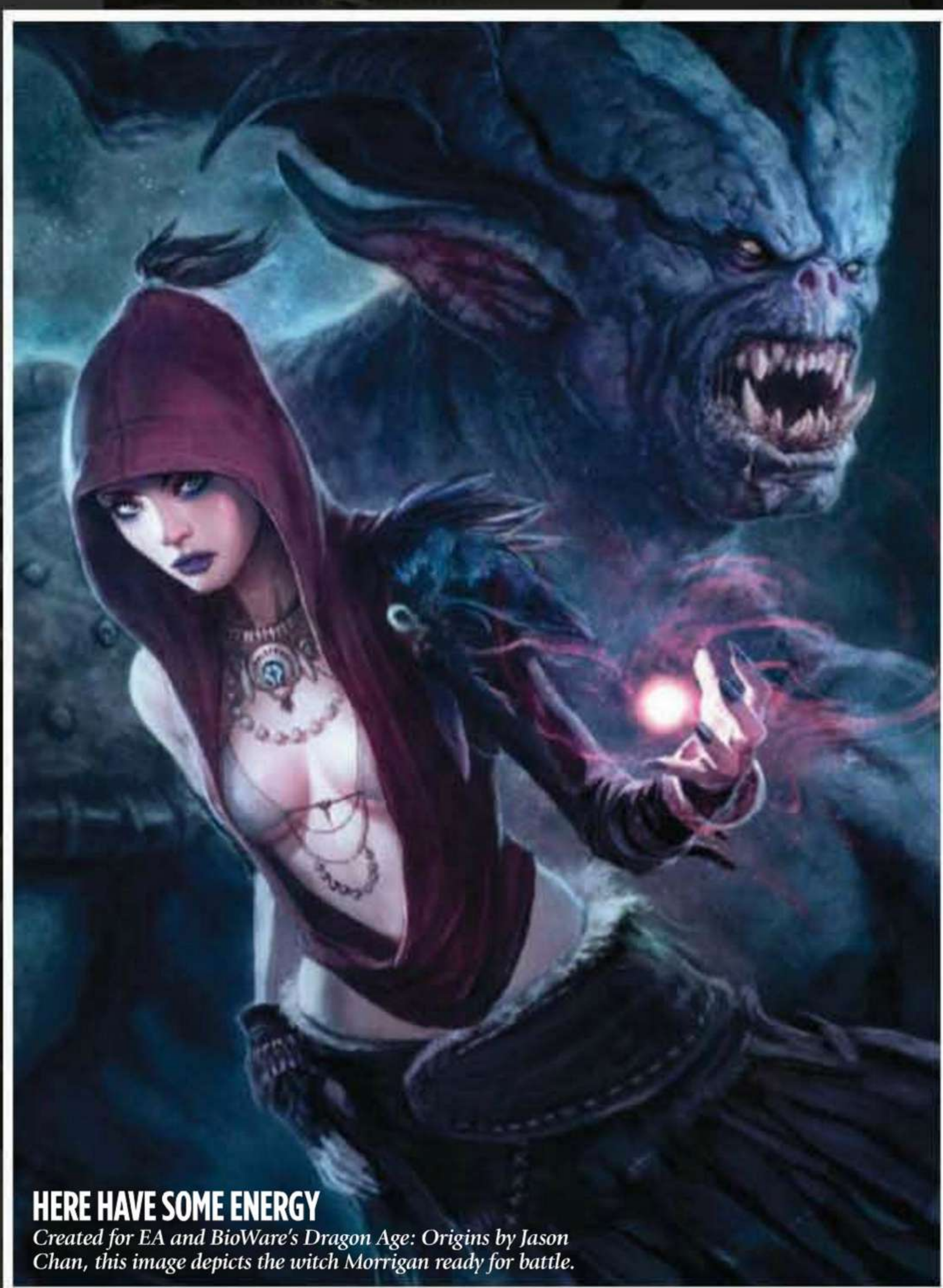
Massive Black is marrying its film, TV, video game and commercial pitches with internally created intellectual property, such as American Pride created by Coro.



“Like it or not, when you work with the same people for six-plus years, they become family. And just for the record, we like it” Chris Hatala



Massive Black's recent success has meant a move to new offices in San Francisco. The wooden panelling and glass-fronted doors hide the studio workspace from prying eyes, while the office pup guards against intruders.



HERE HAVE SOME ENERGY

Created for EA and BioWare's *Dragon Age: Origins* by Jason Chan, this image depicts the witch Morrigan ready for battle.



INFAMOUS

Massive Black has made a name for itself creating original concept art for video games, such as this character art created for Sony's *Infamous*, by senior concept artist Kemp Remillard.



Jason Chan relaxes and takes stock of his current project.

“I came to realise I’d been doing what I wanted all along. Success and fulfilment have little to do with the elusive pot of gold” **Coro**



ROBOT GAME

Sam Brown creates robot and mech concepts for one of Massive Black's forthcoming video game projects.

➡ slice of a proposed game or a playable demo. While Coro's comic took three years to complete, a new game the team are working on using Unity Engine for Emotiv Headset has taken only three months.

“With internal IP, it's kind of like everyone becomes the boss, which is an interesting and very rewarding dynamic,” says Chris, explaining how this work means the Massive Black artists can create the foundations and guidelines of their own ideas. “There's nothing more rewarding than creating and developing your own vision.

“In one way or another, everyone on staff here has a hand in the IP we create.” Whether it's thinking up an idea, fleshing out concept designs, or building and animating 3D models, everyone gets involved. “It's pretty much all hands on deck and any idea presented is developed to a certain degree to ascertain its validity.” ➡

Justin 'Coro' Kaufman



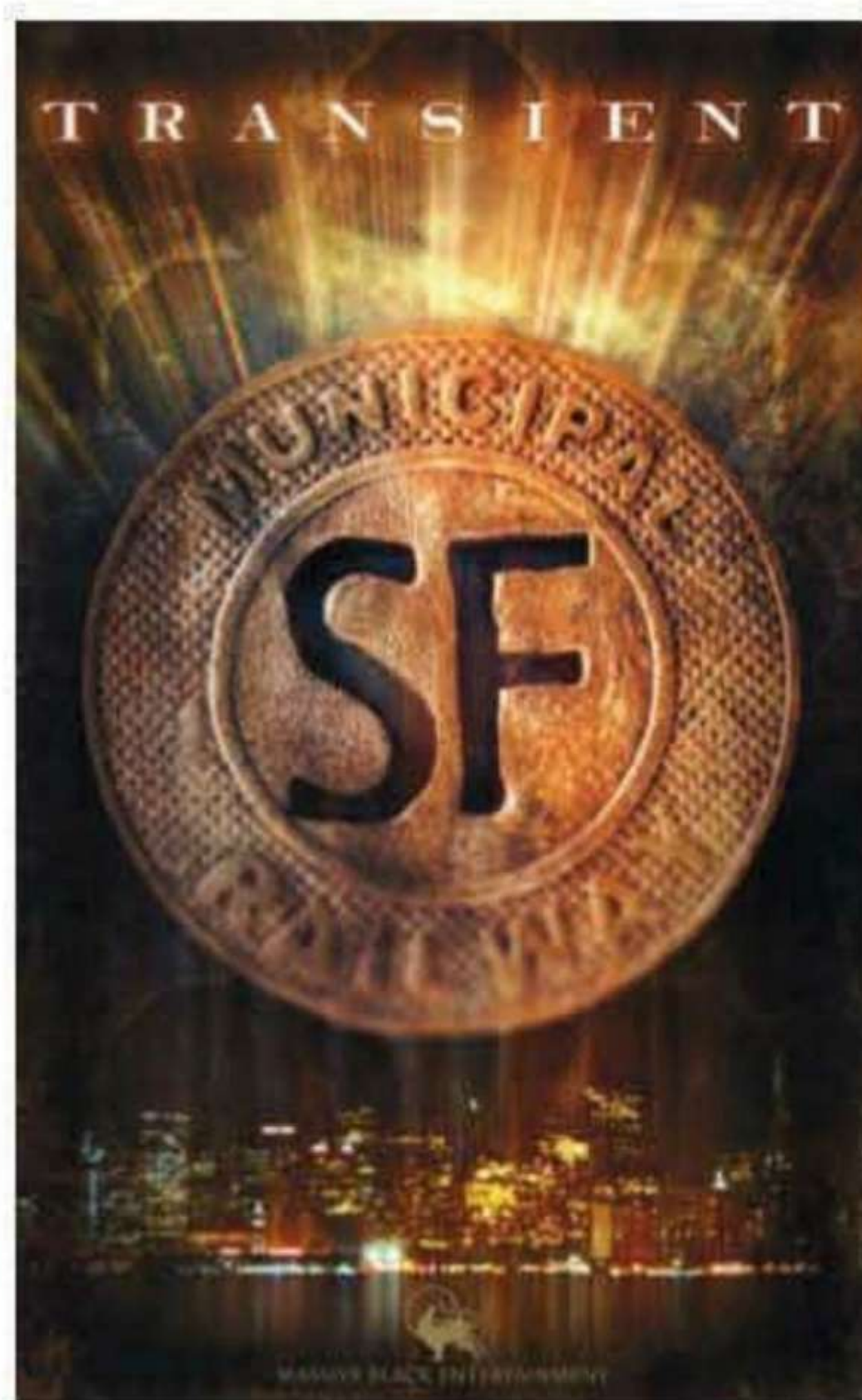
The company's co-founder reveals why artists love working at Massive Black

"Life at Massive Black is like walking a razor's edge between sublime ecstasy, and having your soul's eyes poked out with searing red hot poker," says Coro, as he reflects on the company he helped start. "It's about core, family values, the sense of satisfaction after a hard day's work. It's a steel-hard commitment to keeping it as real as one can, all peppered with liberal amounts of pop culture references... and R Kelly."

There's a sense that Massive Black is a well of creativity where everyone pulls together for the greater good. It wasn't always this way. Coro was here at the beginning when the idea of Massive Black was being thrashed out San Francisco. "Back then the goal was 'let's make a bunch of money so we can do whatever we want,'" says Coro. "Over the years there were lots of us chasing the easy way out, holding onto this silly notion that only by making a ton of cash, could we live out our dreams."

Somehow, somewhere, something changed. "I came to realise I'd been doing what I wanted to do all along. That success and fulfilment have little to do with the elusive pot of

Some IP created at Massive Black takes weeks while others, like Transient, can take years. Coro put the project on hold as writer friends offered advice, then he bit the bullet and took up the challenge to complete his pet project graphic novel.



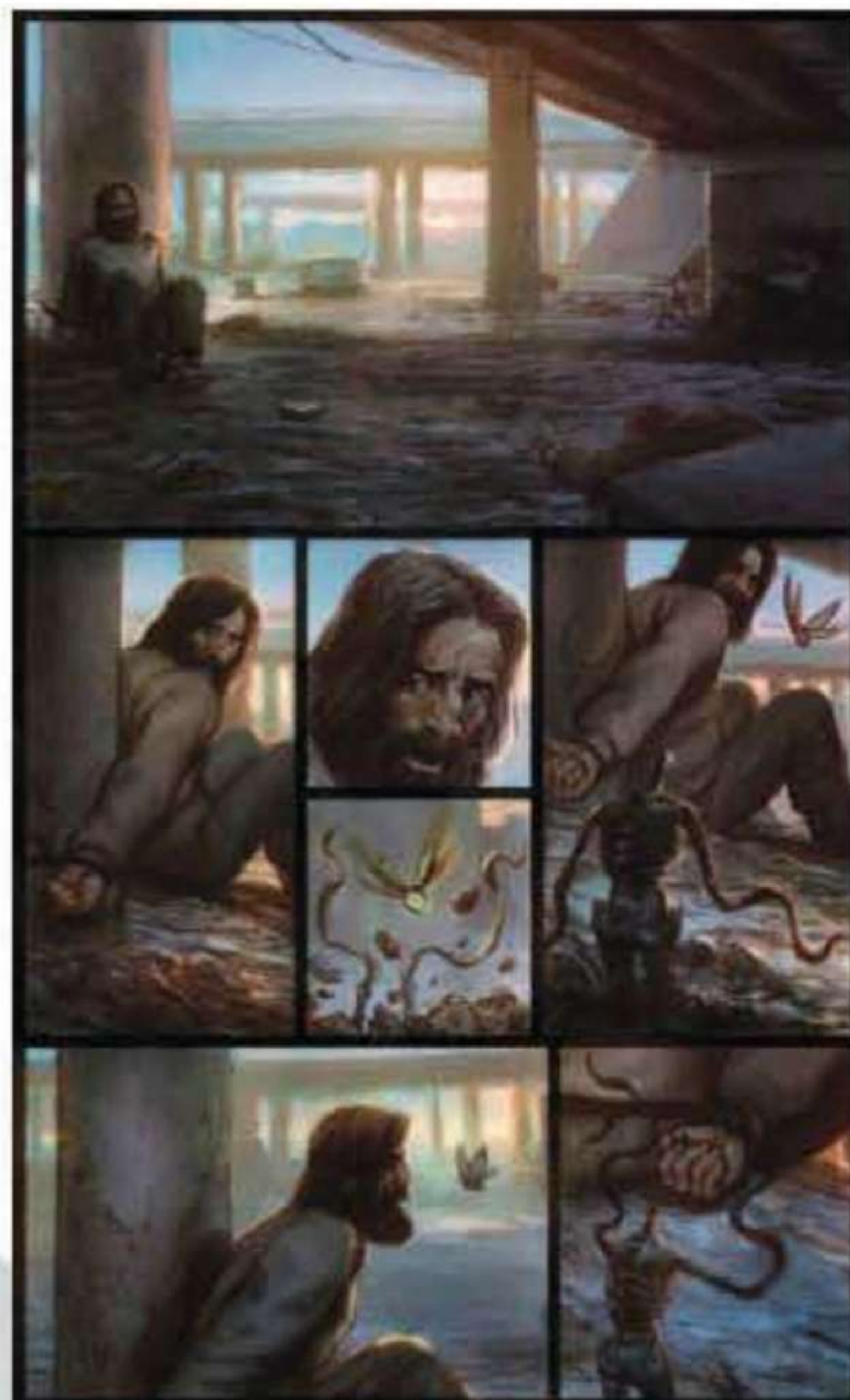
TRANSIENT

Coro's graphic novel took three years to create and follows the trials of a tramp who can see demons living among us, who want to destroy the world.

gold at the end of the rainbow. It's more to do with having a great bunch of people in your life, doing work you enjoy and bettering your craft," says the artist.

Coro opened his eyes to what a creative culture can do. When a group of like-minded, talented artists come together and share ideas and opinions you can't help but be inspired. "It keeps egos in check," he says. "It pushes everyone – you don't want to be the odd one out."

It has been a learning curve for everyone. As Massive Black pushes in new directions, Coro is sure the company will remain "comfortable in its own skin, working towards realistic, creative goals that we're genuinely interested in accomplishing – as opposed to chasing shady deals just to try to make money."



WORKFLOW: COCA-COLA COMMERCIAL

Coro explains how Massive Black got involved with a soft drinks giant

"Massive Black has contributed to all kinds of stuff over the years," says Coro "games, films, toys, commercial campaigns and TV shows."



The studio's clients have included Stanford University research labs, The Sims, Fallout: New Vegas, Transformers, Dancing With the Stars and recently a Coca-Cola commercial designed by Massive Black's Jason Chan.

"It gets to a point where I don't so much keep track of our past jobs, in favour of trying to concentrate 100 per cent on what's on the table at the moment," says Coro. "I really only think back to previous gigs with reference to how I can better solve current problems."



A rowdy orc army and dragon approach an ice castle looking for trouble...



The occupants hatch a plan and try to appease the dragon with an ice statue...



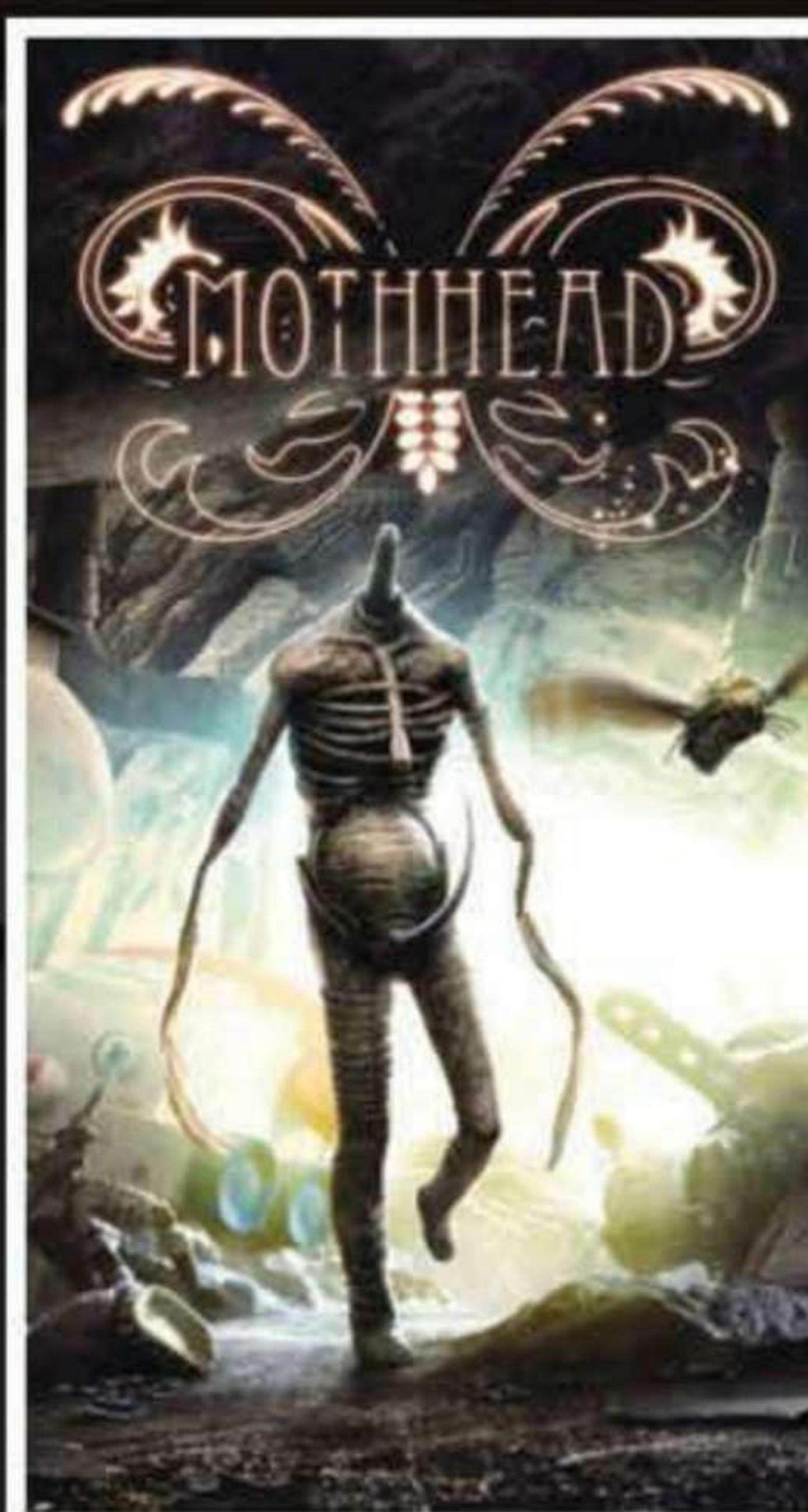
Breathing fire onto the statue, revealing a bottle of chilled Coca-Cola. Party time!

© Client: Nexus and Directors: FX&Mat



BURSTING WITH SUCCESS

Jason Chan painted the pitch idea for this quirky advert for one of the world's largest drinks companies.



MOTHHEAD POSTER

Internally owned IP, such as video game idea Mothhead, are vital to Massive Black's future as it gives the artists ownership of the brands and ideas.

➤ As well as pushing for new IP projects, Chris is keen that Massive Black exploits its art production services, and explores opportunities in social media, film and TV. This latter sector gets Chris teasing us: "We've recently been approached by a very influential 'someone' in this field who has shown great interest in our ideas and potential. So, who knows!"

With so much going on you'd be forgiven for thinking Chris doesn't have time to get his hands dirty anymore. "Taking on the presidential role for Massive Black has been quite the rollercoaster ride," he says. But, despite the demands of making Massive Black a bigger global name, with stints lecturing at conferences in Belgium and England, Chris still finds time to squeeze animation projects into his schedule, "even if I have to take it on the road with me."

STICKY FEET

Chris studied animation at graduate school, "I was paying an arm and a leg to be there, so I was pretty serious about it," he says, shedding light on his passion for the art that was compounded by a role at Weta Digital that demanded perfection. It's this background that's enabled Chris to explore ways in which Massive Black can improve animation in video games, such as the system Chris calls Sticky



Past successes litter the walls of Massive Black's new studio, such as concept art for the epic Sony video game Killzone 2.

ART PROCESS: DRACULA TV COMMERCIAL

Senior concept artist Kemp Remillard explains how a drink's commercial would revitalise a musty old blood sucker...



Coffee, MacBook Pro and talent – the tools of the average Massive Black artist, like Kemp Remillard. Beards are optional, but popular.

Feet, which resolves the issue of software-developed animation cycles not fitting the velocity of in-game animation, causing what's known as slippage. "This is usually forgiven by the gamer," says Chris, "but not by the perfectionist animator."

Solutions like Sticky Feet are taught to the team and fed into a client's project.

Training is the third strand of the Massive Black success story. As a company founded, managed and laboured by creative artists, the company's culture from inception has been about sharing with the community. Massive Black artists regularly host workshops, and share ideas and advice.

Internal training is also vital. "Creating art is like learning how to say something in a new language," says Chris, "there can be 100 ways to say the same thing in any given language, and once you know every possible way, only then can you narrow down the best approach."

This thinking lies at the heart of Massive Black. Whatever the task at hand, there's a generosity of encouragement and a willingness to share skills and ideas that more corporate studios fail to grasp.

"We still love creating art," says Chris, when considering why the studio has caught the eye of so many clients and artists alike.

"We all strive to better our respective crafts on a day-to-day basis."

In hindsight, with so much success, it's a good job they didn't call the company Beefcramp Inc... ☘



1. CHARACTER CONCEPTS

"Initially, we'll provide an array of sketches based on the client's description. For this we kept with Dracula before his transformation so that we'd have a look to reference after he turns happy."



2. FINAL DESIGN

"Once our client has reviewed the work we move on to a rough final image. For this, the middle character from the first image was picked after comments and feedback. We also needed to provide an after transformation image. Usually, there'll be one or two exchanges of feedback before the final image is arrived upon."



3. ROUGH ENVIRONMENT (INTERIOR)

"Our character needed a setting, so we worked up two rough images for the interior and exterior. We also needed to show them before and after the transformation. One sad, one happy."

4. ROUGH ENVIRONMENT (EXTERIOR)

"The images are created with a combination of 3D block mesh and Photoshop painting. Using 3D helps expedite the process and ensure that things, like details and perspective, are placed correctly in space."



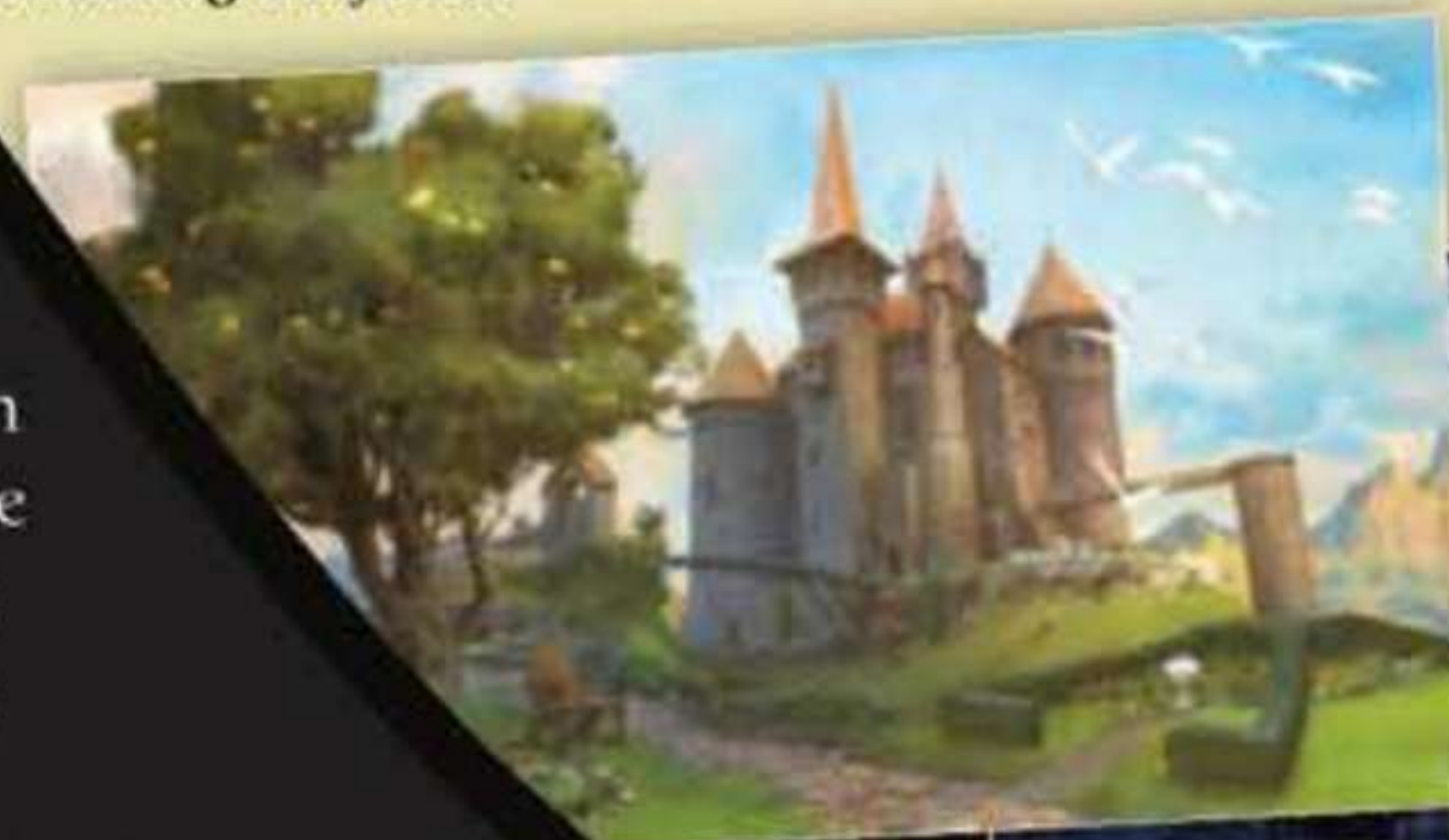
5. FINAL ENVIRONMENT (INTERIOR)

"After the initial round of images is reviewed by our client they'll supply feedback and comments. For this, the interior shot was too distant, so the shot was brought closer. Details like the armour suit were added, along with a fire and a chandelier."



6. FINAL ENVIRONMENT (EXTERIOR)

"For the exterior, things like an owl and gate were added for dramatic effect. Once the exterior is changed, Dracula decks out his yard with a rustic Adirondack chair and a charming bird feeder."



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ImagineFX August 2011

See page 114 for full DVD contents ➔

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

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Advice from the world's best artists

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Cover artist Bobby Chiu paints a deceptively cute woodland predator with an intriguing back-story.

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Simon Dominic makes the most of a key new feature in Painter 12.

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Photoshop

THE FINE ART OF CREATURE DESIGN



Bobby Chiu invites us into his mind, as the creature enthusiast reveals his creative and technical processes behind this issue's entrancing cover

Artist PROFILE

Bobby Chiu
COUNTRY: Canada



Bobby has worked for Warner Bros., Dreamworks, and Sony's

Imageworks and Animation divisions. He owns Imaginism Studios in Toronto and teaches on schoolism.com.

imaginismstudios.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Bobby Chiu folder in the Workshops section.

Wildlife in general – and creatures in particular – have always fascinated me. How an animal moves, fights and survives all play vital roles in its ultimate design. This is important because, as with all fictional animals, the biggest obstacle your creature must overcome is the viewer's disbelief. When I come up with creature designs for films, it's extremely important for me to think about the story and the feeling I want the audience to

have when looking at the creature. It has to be believable and interesting.

One of the best signs of a great creature design is when people say: "I'd love to see one of these things in person". Think about how memorable your creature is. If it looks like a million other things you've seen then no one's going to remember it.

In this workshop I'll take you through the twists and turns I took in creating my painting, entitled Early Bloom. I hope my process will help steer you towards the

right kinds of questions to ask yourself when designing your own creations.

Keep in mind that I didn't come up with this image alone. I worked with Paul "Mo" Tysall, ImagineFX's art editor, who along with the editor, art directed me, so I'll also talk in this workshop about the revisions or problems the team saw in the piece and how we worked together to solve them. Part of doing good work in the commercial art industry is finding good creative people to work with.

1 The idea

Once every 10 years, before the magenta flowers of the Rutilus tree fully bloom, the Blossoming Dissimulic will come out of its nest inside the tree to feed. The bright magenta hairs on its antlers resemble Rutilus flowers and attract a huge array of little critters from the forest. This one week of feeding will sustain the Dissimulic as it hibernates until the next Rutilus blossom.



2 The logic

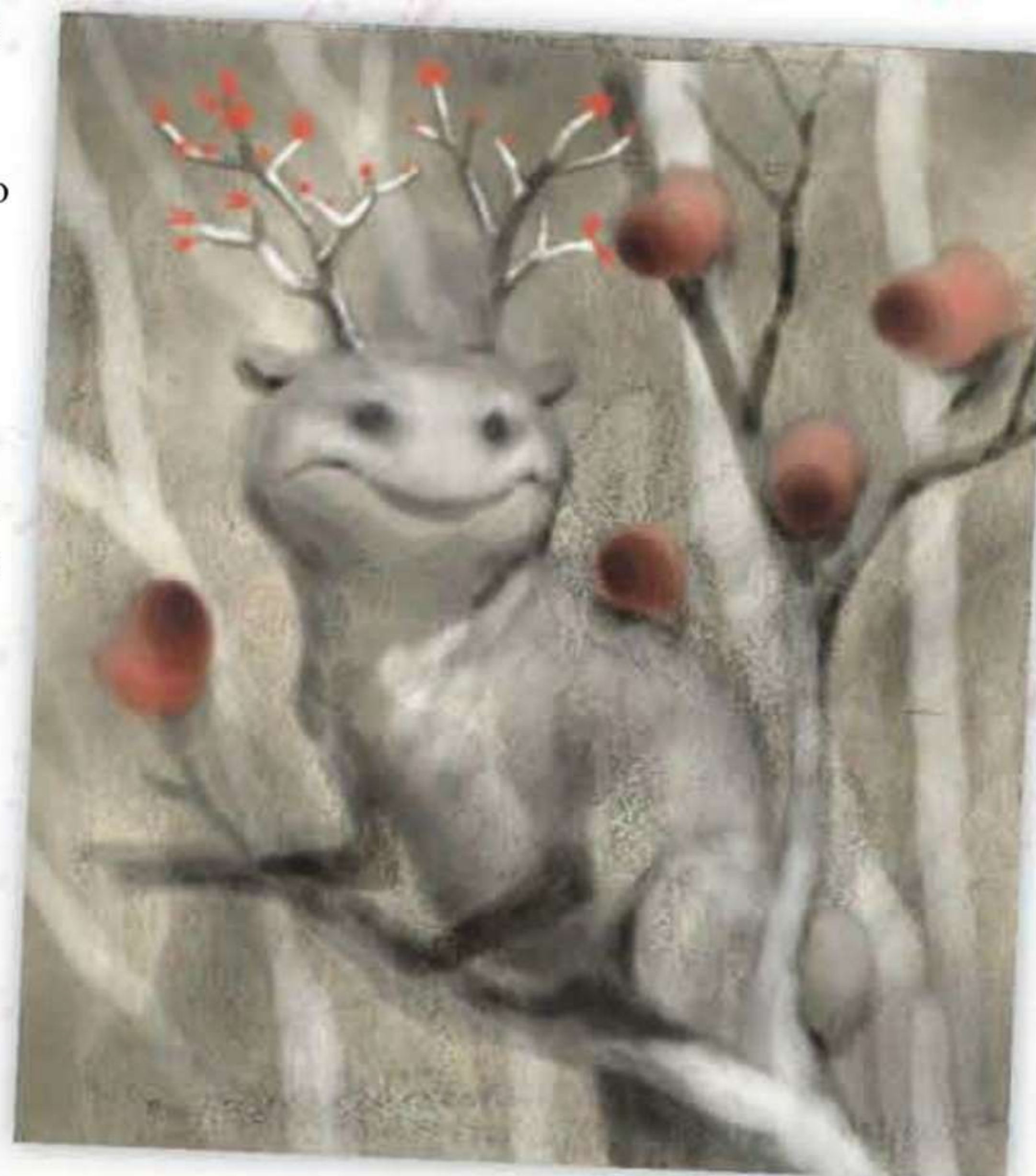
The Blossoming Dissimulic means Blossoming Disguise. The idea behind Early Bloom is that there's a predator with colourful antlers that resemble flowers of the tree it lives in. Because the tree hasn't yet bloomed, all the little critters are attracted to the colourful antlers. We can see similar predatory tactics in our world, such as the angler fish. This particular painting would be the moment before the predator attacks and feeds on the little critters.

3 Initial sketch

The initial sketch is a thumbnail that I do just for myself. It's not something that I plan on handing in. I keep it scratchy and small so that I can sketch the ideas out quickly, one after another. When the drawing is small, it's easier to concentrate on the feeling of the entire image without fear of getting lost in any particular part of the painting, which is a risk otherwise, in my experience.

4 Ready to submit

To submit a sketch is to submit an idea. You want to make sure that all the most important points of the idea can be communicated quickly and clearly. The main things I want to show are the image's general composition and the story idea that little prey creatures are being attracted to the colourful antlers. What kind of creatures they are will be figured out later; those details aren't so important at the moment.



ImagineFX

August 2011



PRO SECRETS

Vary the values

When I'm finished, I like to create a duplicate of my painting on a single layer and use Auto Contrast to see how it would look if the values were pushed even further. Then I turn down the opacity of the layer to see if there's a blend of the two versions that might look better than the original.



5 Notes from Paul

Before progressing the idea further, I talk with Paul and Claire and get their feedback on how the piece is going. The team wants more prey creatures and more interesting eyes in my Dissimulic. They also suggest a colour scheme and mention that parts of the image can overlap the type on the cover. Many of the ideas they bring up are things that I'd planned to introduce in the next stage of developing my idea, so it was simply a matter of showing ImagineFX my work in progress before going further with it.

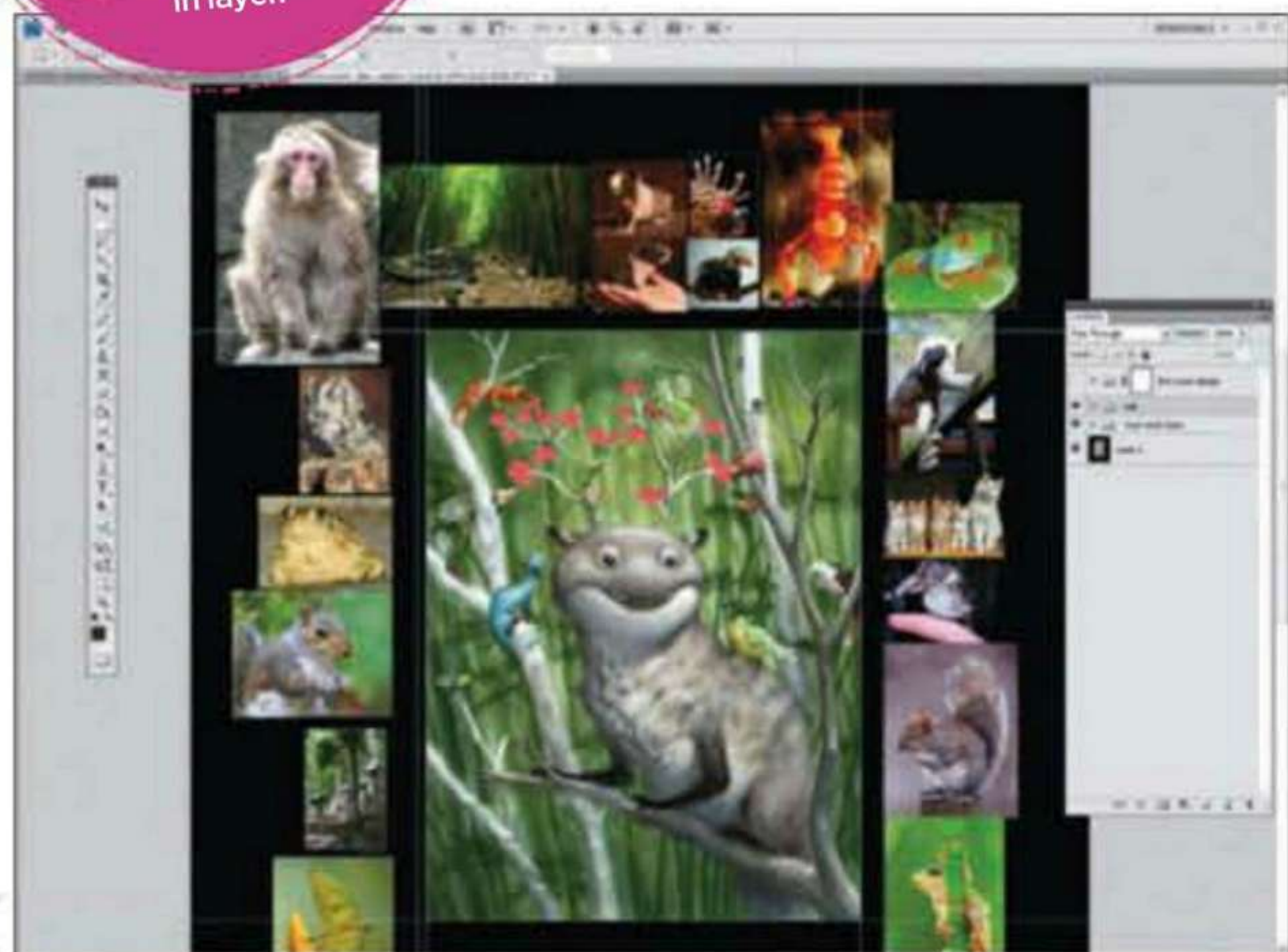
Shortcuts

Create clipping mask

Ctrl+Alt+G (PC)

Cmd+Alt+G (Mac)

Enables painting only over the block-in layer.



6 Gather reference

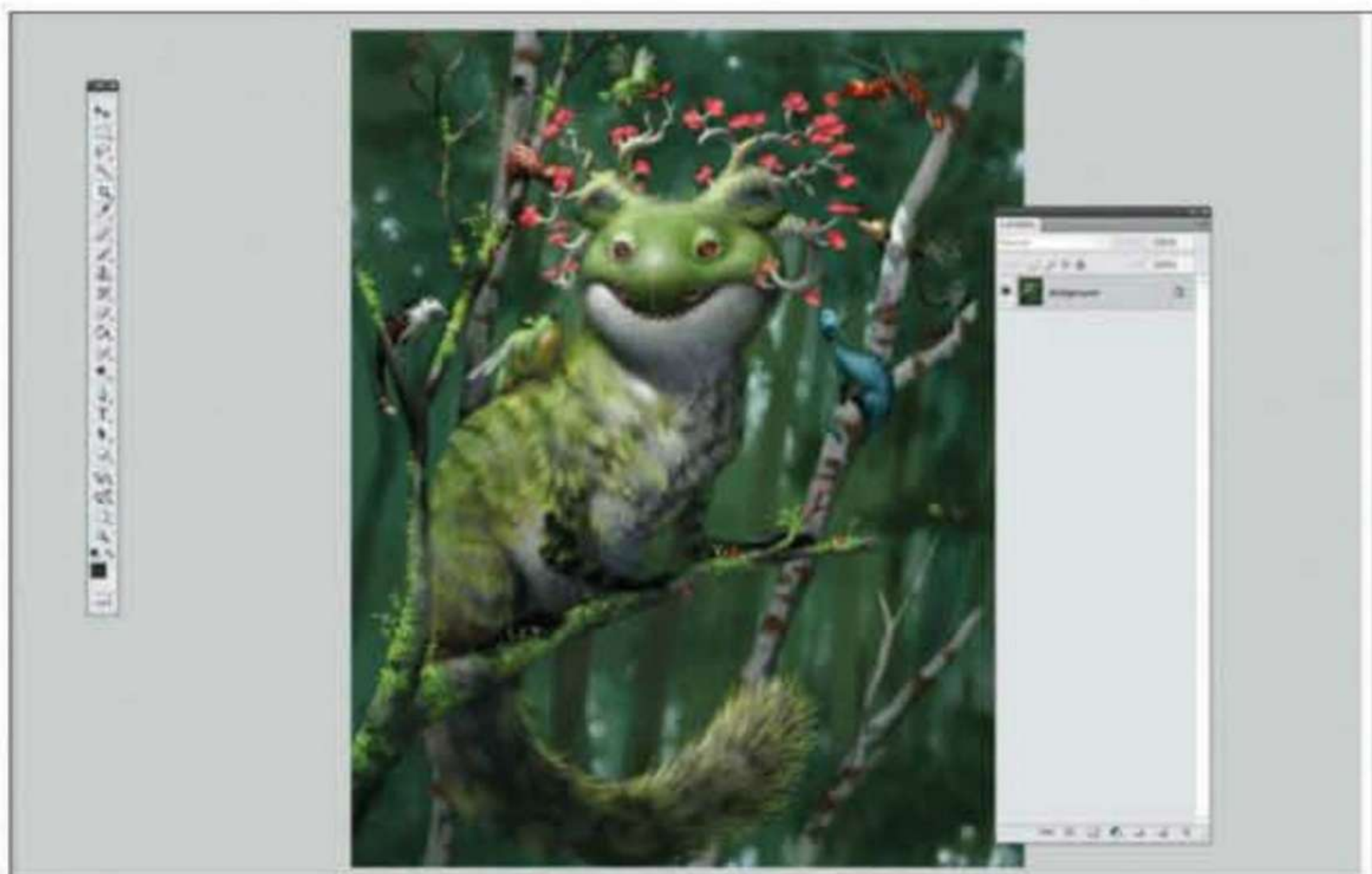
Once the loose sketches of my initial creature ideas get the green light, I gather reference images (the more the better!) that might help me solidify my image. As the direction of my creature becomes clearer, I start eliminating reference images that are of no use.

7 Refining

Realism comes from subtleties, not just in little technical details – like highlighting the tiny claws – but from the idea itself. So when coming up with an imaginative creature, it's important to pay attention to function: how it moves, how it eats, and so on. I ask myself whether the creature belongs in the environment and what's appealing about its design? What emotions do I want to evoke when someone looks at it?

8 Revisions

This is a step that'll be repeated over and over again, sometimes by the client and sometimes by myself. After completing the first batch of notes from ImagineFX, I was asked to change the colour scheme. Revisions are a common thing in this line of work, so it's important to remember that it's a team effort to come up with something that reflects both the client's vision and your own.



9 A fresh perspective

If possible, I try to refresh my perspective of the painting by giving myself a day away from it. If I can't spare a day, I may flip the image horizontally. Getting a fresh perspective is crucial to high-quality work. In the past I've had to rush to meet a deadline and have handed the art in after working non-stop for the entire day. I'm usually pretty tired and have been looking at my paintings for far too long. A situation I want to avoid.

10 Technical details

After I've sufficiently refined the idea for my creature, it's time to paint in some technical details using the reference images I've collected. However, I use material very loosely and only as inspiration. I avoid relying on the references too much for two reasons: first, my ideas tend to be fresher and more original this way; and second, I find it's great practice to paint out of my head when I use fewer reference images.



Shortcuts

Auto contrast

Shift+Ctrl+Alt+L (PC)
Shift+Cmd+Alt+L (Mac)
A great way to stretch your values to their limits, to check out image variations.



11 Keep your work clean

When working on assignments with other people, it's important to keep my layers clean and to place different elements on different layers. This simple habit saves me a lot of time and hassle when I have to make revisions, especially to elements that have complex or semi-transparent silhouettes.

12 Lighting the scene

I like to use arrows or lines to help me judge where the light's coming from. For complex scenes, I draw 3D arrows to keep everything consistent. I usually keep these arrows on layers separate from everything else, and once I put them in place, I lock the layer to ensure that I don't paint on it by mistake.



14 Colour decisions

In this case, Paul gave me certain colours to work with, so that simplified my colour decisions. Otherwise, it helps to have a basic colour scheme in mind before going into the image. Most colour choices I would make involve adding or taking away contrast, which is similar to my thinking when it comes to values.



13 Textures

I wouldn't dress in denim from head to toe because that would look too uniform and weird and the same thing goes for my paintings. It's a good idea to vary the use of textures or else things might start to look a bit plain or strange (unless that's what you're going for). Have a good think about how the different elements of the painting differ in texture from one another, and work from there.

15 Rim lighting

There was a request to add a strong, warm light to the image, to bring the foreground out a bit more. Often, this is achieved by adding another light or a stronger light to the scene. I approach lighting in a painting like lighting in the scene of a movie. I ask myself what needs to be in shadow and what needs to have light, and how much light should there be? However, it's important to remember that I can't just add lights wherever I want arbitrarily; there must be a reason for a light source to be where it is.

PRO SECRETS

Make room for references

When collecting references, expand the canvas of your painting so that you can place all of your reference images around your painting and save it together all on the same file. This way, if you restart your computer, you don't have to open up multiple files to get ready to paint - you only need to open up the one file and it'll already have all of your references organised around it.



16 Adjustment layers

Using adjustment layers is a simple way to tweak aspects of my painting while keeping all the details intact. This is especially helpful for parts that are highly detailed, because I don't want to repaint them all. With an adjustment layer I can fine-tune the colour, light or shadows in certain areas by hiding or showing the adjustments with a layer mask.

17 Detailing

I like to paint at a larger size than what the final size will be. As long as my computer doesn't lag, I try to work in as big a format as possible. When I do illustrations that require a finished look, I often work with the painting zoomed in at 100 per cent so I can inspect it and work on my image in good detail.





Painter & Photoshop PAINT A HORSE IN A FANTASY SETTING

Matt Stawicki makes use of several photo references – and a pumpkin – to produce a striking fantasy composition featuring a powerful steed

Artist PROFILE

Matt Stawicki
COUNTRY: US



Since starting his career in 1992, Matt's created many images for a

range of products and clients, including book covers, video game covers, collectible card images, collectors plates and fantasy pocket-knives, to name but a few. mattstawicki.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Matt Stawicki folder in the Workshops section.

In this workshop I'll show you my process of creating the characters of the horse and its unearthly rider. I'll work with photo references for both, and use them as drawing guides for the horse, hopefully creating a dramatic pose that's based on several pieces of reference material. I'll use a more direct photo paint-over

method for the figure. This is the basic approach that I use on most of my cover work. Keep in mind that the methods are interchangeable and can be applied to different elements of a piece, depending on what the goal for that element is.

For example, in this piece I don't want the horse to look like a photo. I want it to have a more painted, stylised and iconic

pose, rather than a more realistic one such as I might produce through working with one specific piece of reference. On the other hand, for the rider I want to work with all of the information that the photo reference has to offer and edit as needed. I'm keen for the folds of the cloth, overall form and the pose of the figure to have a more life-like quality.

1 In the beginning

I take the approved sketch and use Photoshop's Color Balance, Hue/Saturation and Brightness/Contrast tools to create a sketch on a tinted ground that's roughly the colour and value that I want. I then start laying in the basic values using a normal opaque colour and a Multiply layer, producing a translucent tone that doesn't totally obscure the sketch.

2 Horse reference

For this horse, one of the first things I do is gather photos or other sources of reference that I think will be helpful. Here's a look at a selection of different shots I'll be using as the guide for this. I usually keep my reference files on my second monitor, so that my main screen remains free for the piece itself and the palettes.



4 Starting the horse

I take a simple brush tool with a hard edge and start drawing the horse. The process is a corrective one for me. I'm constantly referring back to my horse reference file, looking at the legs on one, the neck on another, and so forth. I scale the brush size up and down constantly.

3 Keeping a method to the madness

I like to keep the starting point for a particular session on the Background layer. I duplicate the layer and usually name it 'Image'. On top of that, I start another layer named 'Detail', on which I start working over the image. I try to keep the adding of Detail layers to a minimum, and then merge them when I'm happy with the result – even merging them to the Image layer once in a while. When I feel that the piece has progressed enough I'll resave the document, usually with a letter or number. In this case 'Headless Rider a' will become 'Headless Rider b', and so on. This gives me a safety-net copy to refer back to.

5 Change of head

I start a new layer and patch out the head. I want to give it more of a profile view to show off its silhouette. I want to get the iconic look of a chess-set knight, especially as the rider doesn't have a face. ➡





STAWICKI
2011

August 2011

ImagineFX



6 First image flip

Now that the horse is basically laid in, I still have a few problems to work out. To see these more clearly, I rotate the canvas horizontally. I do this regularly while painting, and I also find this helps to break patterns that I tend to develop.

7 Surrounding colours

I now start laying in the surrounding colours and start to get more of a feel of how this palette is going to evolve. Another advantage of having the new detail on a separate layer is that I often like what I've done, but find it just a bit too strong. To counter this, I reduce the opacity of the new Detail layer down to about 60 or 70 per cent before I merge it with the main Detail layer.



8 Forward thinking

I'm not concerned with the figure at this point – in fact, I'm patching most of it out as I work. My figure reference will dictate his placement later.



PRO SECRETS

Make the most of digital art

Try to keep an open mind as you work. One of the plus points of working digitally is the ability to make bold moves based on how the piece is developing. The other thing I'd recommend is to constantly hit Save. I also back up all my finished files to CD.



9 Smooth and simple

Once I have a fair amount in place, I move the piece to Painter. I'm looking to take the linear, drawn edge off it and give it a more painterly look. First I simplify the layers by merging as many of them as I can in Photoshop. I start in Painter by creating a new layer on top. I use the Blenders brush set to Just Add Water and about 40 per cent Opacity, and begin smoothing out the image. I think that this helps to knock the obvious look of the Photoshop brushes down into a more 'painted' start for the background. Once I get to a point I'm happy with, I take the image back into Photoshop.



10 The figure reference

Now it's time to get the photo reference for the rider into the piece. I set up the lights so they match the lighting on the horse and note the camera angle/eye level I want. For this piece, I just need a body in some period costume. After shooting several poses, I select this one because of how I think it will work with the pose of the horse.



11 Placing the reference

I lasso the figure from the reference and put it on its own layer for now. I erase the negative space and head, leaving only what I need. As before, I duplicate the figure layer and hide it. I start making adjustments to the pose of the figure by lassoing the boot and rotating it until I like it. On a new layer, I draw the rest of the neck and head, and make a few other changes. This is now my basic reference layer for the rider.

12 Mask adjustments

Now that I have what looks like a headless model, I need to make some value and colour adjustments. I go into Quick Mask and make a mask, using the brush tools, for the shirt. I then take it out of Quick Mask and duplicate the figure layer, before inverting the selection and deleting everything but the shirt. Now I can make value adjustments using Brightness and Contrast as well as colour adjustments using Color Balance. I take the same approach on the trousers. Now, my figure is dressed in dark clothes.





13 Figure drawing

I duplicate and reorganise my layers, and start a detail layer to further correct the figure's edges and costume. I also start to add the saddle detail and the pumpkin. At this point I've started a file of various Jack-o'-lanterns. I also want to shroud a cape around the main parts of the figure. I constantly make corrections to the size of the figure and saddle while they're still on separate layers, and rotate the piece using the Rotate View tool.

14 Further corrections

I now want to start working on the anatomy of the horse again. I have some problems with the front legs, so I check my horse reference file and rework them, continuing to add detail. At some points, I lasso and select an area of the horse's head and apply the Transform tool. Once I'm happy with the lassoed area, I merge it back to the Image layer. I don't worry about seeing the edges of the cut-out section, as I'll go on to reshape and smooth these out later.



Shortcuts

Select colour

Alt (PC & Mac)

Switch between a brush or drawing tool and the Eyedropper by holding down Alt.



16 Selective rim lighting

I continue to detail the figure and horse, adding the light from the Jack-o'-lantern as I go. I could have shot the figure reference with this rim light, but I only want it to appear in very specific places. I use a variety of textured brushes, playing around with the settings each time – usually the Scattering and Texture options. I also refine the drawing of the tree in the background.

17 Tidying up

Now that the piece is starting to take shape, I go back into Painter to deal with all the little bits of photography that are left in the figure, as well as to soften the maple leaves and background, again using the Blenders brush. To add details back in at this point, I use the Oil Pastel Brush set to Chunky Pastel, and the Oil brush set to Fine Camel Hair. Once I'm happy, I go back into Photoshop to draw in some more environmental details.



ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: MAIN DRAWING 1

Great for straight lines with pen pressure on. Press Shift to connect the line between points.

MAIN DRAWING 2

I've set up this brush so that strokes trail off and look more natural with pen pressure turned off.

TEXTURE

This is handy for adding a texture and detail without over-rendering certain areas.

SCATTERED LEAVES

I'm sure that you can figure out what this arboreal-themed brush is good for!

18 Figure details

It's time to start adding some details. I refer back to figure reference and start adding studs and so on to the horse and riders' outfits. I also start defining the distant background. At one point, after flattening all of the detail on the Image layer I duplicate it and set the layer to Color Dodge at an opacity of between 10 and 15 per cent. This heightens the value and brings out the highlights a touch.



19 New horse head

The head of the horse needs to be more animated. So I find a reference shot that's closer to the pose and position I want. For this I bring in the photo reference of the new horse head and leave it on its own layer. I adjust the angle by transforming it and begin to redraw the head as well as other figure details. When I'm satisfied I delete the horse head reference and resave. I then take the image into Painter for some final tweaks.

20 Pushing the light

I want to increase the light effect from the Jack-o'-lantern. On a separate layer I use a Radial Gradient tool to create a circular gradation over the light area, set the layer to Color Dodge and reduce the opacity to about 15 per cent. Then I set a layer to Darken and work out the negative space behind the tree and around the figure's upper body. Once I'm happy I flatten and add a detail layer for finishing touches. I add a more detail to the horse's tack and some blowing leaves, which help bring more of the orange colour into the piece and add some more motion.



15 Adding the background detail

This is the point where I start to use a wider assortment of brushes. I use the Maple Leaf brush in a scattering effect to lay in the leaves, and adjust the colour until I'm happy with it. I also set a layer to Color Dodge to add some lighter background values and enhance the glowing effect that I want to achieve in the back.

Photoshop COMBINE BEAUTY WITH FANTASY



Working elements

These elements are functional, rather than just being merely ornamental. They keep the composition in balance where it would normally lean to the left. A texture on an Overlay layer creates a golden shimmering effect.

Age-old appearance

On top of the layers I apply a texture to give a vintage impression, on a Multiply Blending mode and 20 per cent opacity. Using Color Balance I adjust the yellows to create a shade with an ochre background. On highlighted areas of the body I mask the texture to retain a neat, brilliant appearance.



Classic Japanese culture meets a tentacle-filled dream-world in the hands of **Fabio Barboni**

My experience of culture over the years has enabled me to appreciate the overall themes that are present in a range of art forms. Yet today more than ever, art not only represents a purely visual pleasure, it also conveys an idea or feeling associated with images intended for rapid consumption, such as in advertising.

I'd argue that beauty's art aesthetic has a stronger impact. Its appeal is timeless because it's not weighed down by current trends. However, to avoid painting a cold, sterile image it's necessary to give the character an emotional state, a

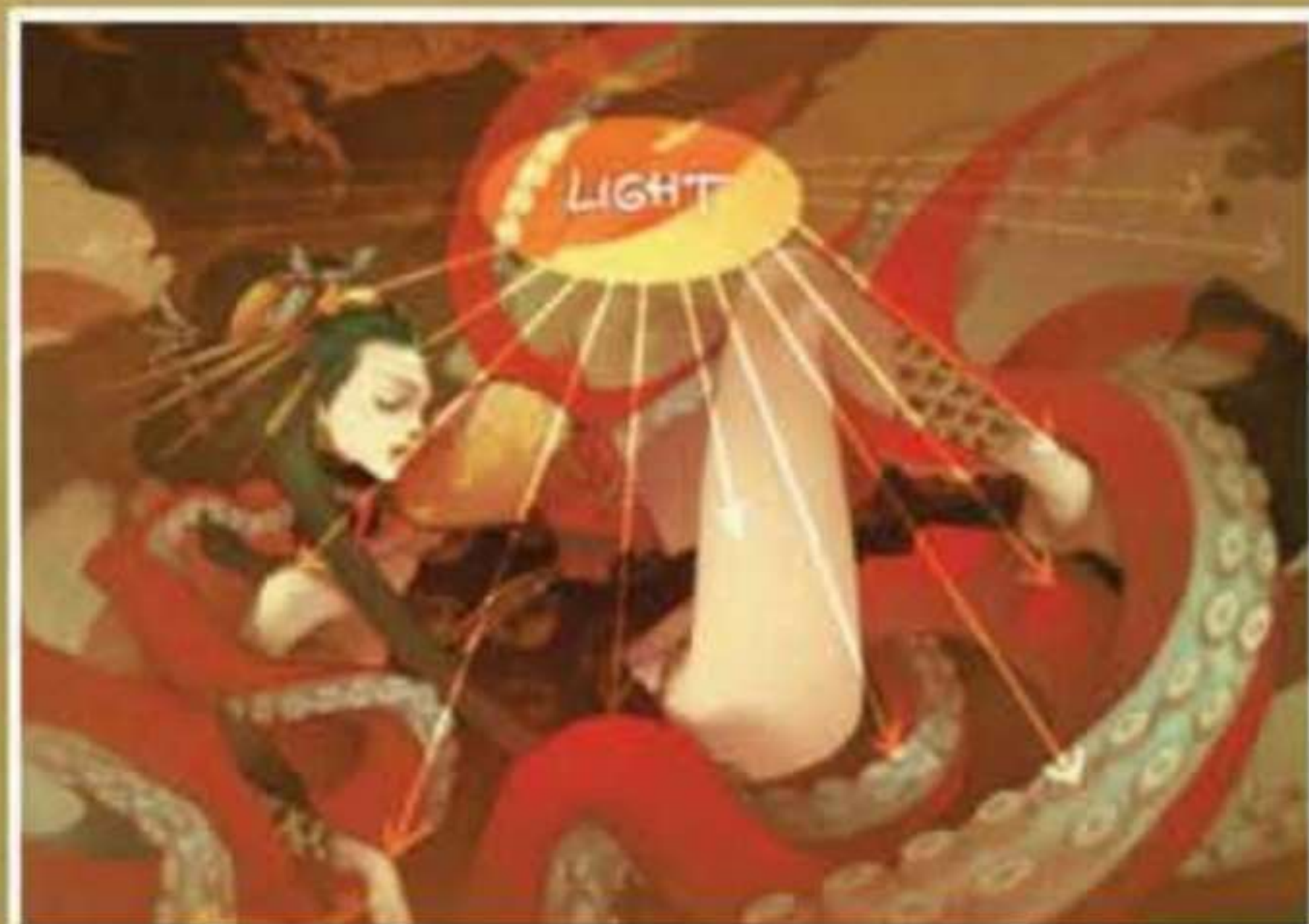
specific mood. In my image, Dream State, I've tried to achieve this goal using two specific motifs: Japanese culture and an ethereal setting. The result is a traditional beauty wearing the trappings of a modern-day geisha, floating languidly in a visionary world of dreams and tentacles.

The key to this piece is the elegant abandonment that's symbolised by the female body. The colour palette works towards amplifying this feeling. In doing so, the tendrils become a soft resting area, leaving behind any associations with the erotic and violent nature that's commonly associated with Ukiyo-e woodprints.

I strengthen my storytelling by giving the character an Edo period hairstyle, and hint at mysterious creatures at work.

Lighting scheme

To emphasise the dreamy mood of the image I employ an unnatural lighting scheme; the light is strongest just above the feminine body, although it's not clear where it's coming from. This effect is amplified by the reddish desaturation of the borders, which is achieved by painting yellow onto a Color layer. What's not directly illuminated appears to blend into the background, creating a sense of depth.



Artist PROFILE

Fabio Barboni
COUNTRY: Italy



Fabio has a diploma of higher education in digital

communications and web design. He works as a freelance artist for creative studios and private customers.
fabioarboni.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on this month's DVD in the Fabio Barboni folder, in the Workshops section.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BASIC 1

This brush is very versatile: it's good for laying down soft shades and details. I use it for most of my work.

DOTS 1

I often use brushes to create brightness effects. You can paint a sparkling effect or apply small touches of light if used as a stamp.

How I create...

A GEISHA CAUGHT IN A DREAM



1 Visualise the idea

After deciding on the general composition, I refine the main element through a number of sketches. I work directly in digital with a standard round brush. I simplify the character's anatomy – at this stage I prefer to highlight the figure's movement. To better place the main element in the area, I visualise it as a geometric shape.



2 Define the light

I began to paint in greyscale with a soft brush to define lights and shadows. I don't go overboard with contrasts because my reference towards Japanese prints doesn't require accentuated forms. On top of this layer I create a new one and set it to Color. This blending mode enables me to spread out the essential tints while keeping the shading constant.



3 Texture pass

After painting in the last few details I Copy-Merge the finished image on to another layer. With Color Balance set to Multiply Blending mode I use red to saturate the colours. I apply a texture to give the impression that I've painted the image on to a canvas. Overlay and Color Burn layer modes enable me to boost light and shadows. With the application of Overlay and Color Burn layers I amplify lights and shadows to produce the finished painting.

Silo

TAKE YOUR FIRST STEPS IN 3D ART



Discover how to model your 2D creature design for animation, print or even your very own game, with **Glen Southern's** expert advice

At some point most artists wonder what it would be like to see their characters or creations translated into 3D. That 3D model might be for a game, to be animated or for some form of rapid prototyping. You may even just want to create a 3D model to help you improve your own concepts. Being able to rotate a model and see it from all sides will also help you decide if the design is working and if it'll suit its intended purpose.

While it's always a pleasure to see what other artists can do with your ideas, it's an even greater pleasure to do the translation yourself. But where do you

start? Hitting the ground running in the 3D world can be a daunting task. What software should you use? Should you learn the basics of box modelling or begin building a model point by point? Should you use a more modern method of modelling like digital sculpting with ZBrush or Mudbox?

This workshop will take some of the pressure off and give you an insight into Silo, a low-cost modelling package that's easy to learn, used in lots of production environments and is also a package that has all the tools you'll need to create a 3D creature. You can find out more about Silo by downloading the trial on the DVD.

Artist PROFILE

Glen Southern
COUNTRY: England

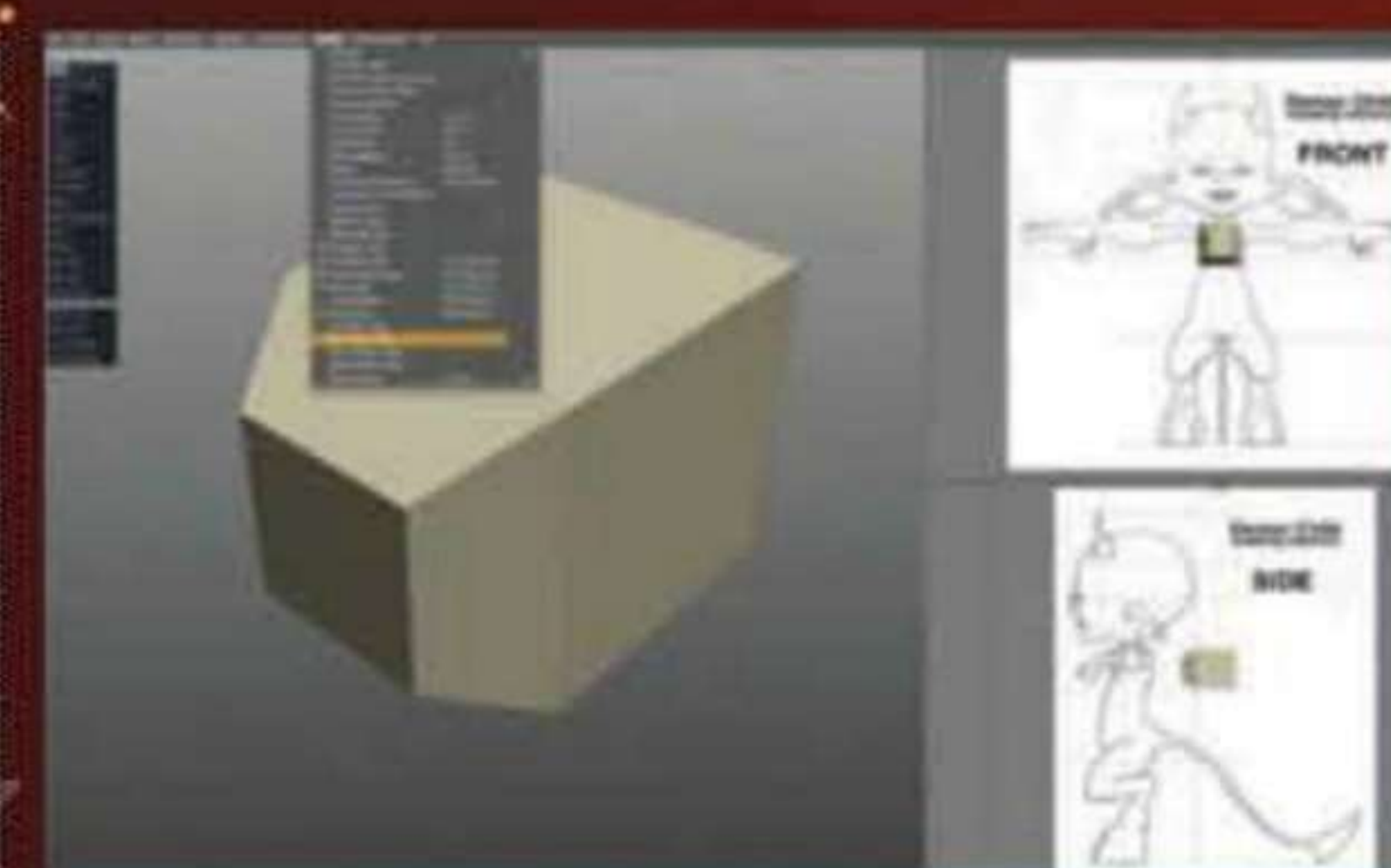


Freelance 3D modeller Glen is also the creative director and

partner at SPArleVFX, based in Liverpool.
southerngfx.co.uk

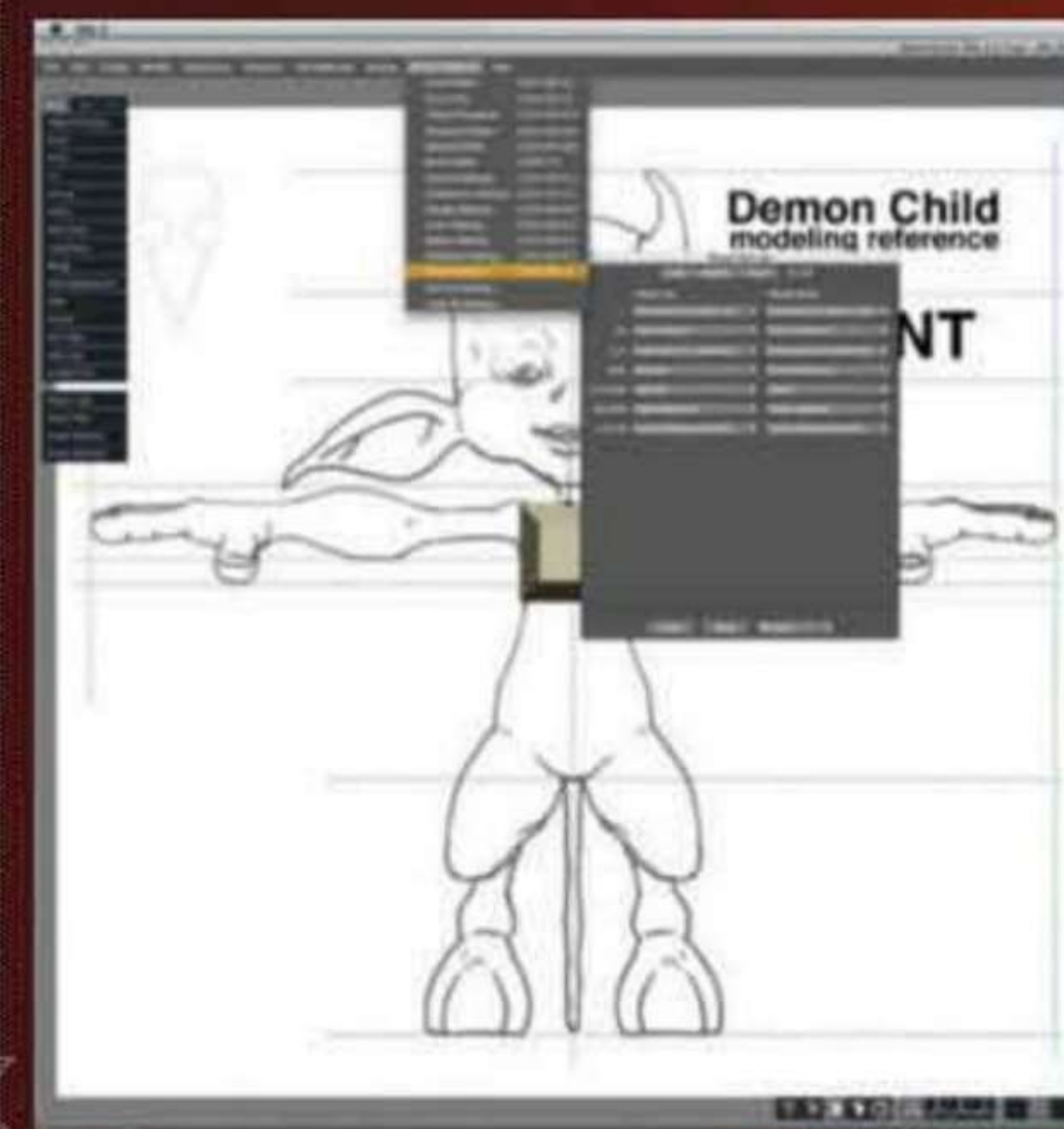
DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Workshops section.
SOFTWARE: Silo (trial)



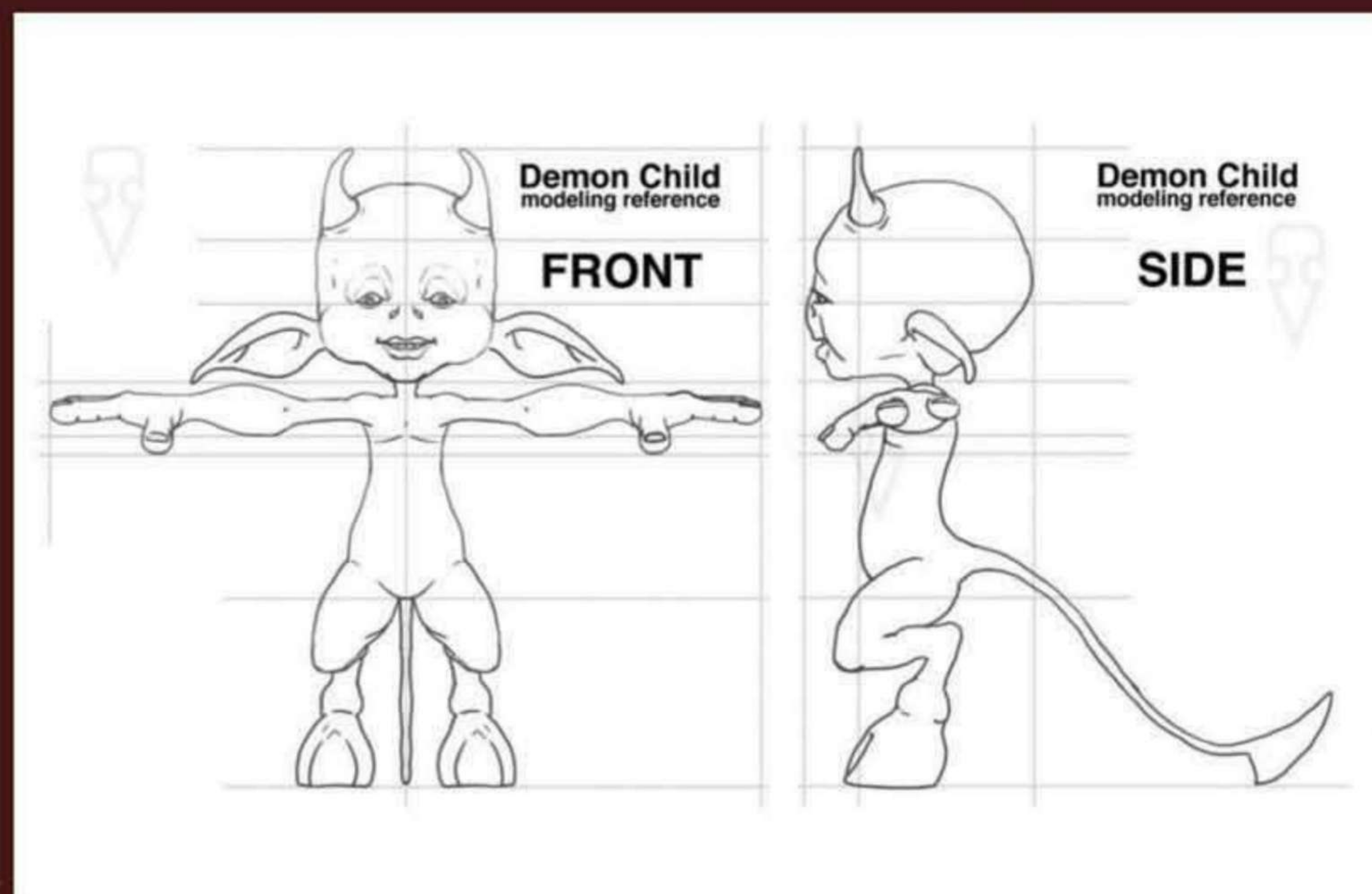
2 Importing the images

I save the two images and then launch Silo. Press Space to go from a single view to a quad view. I add the images by clicking into the front view (press 2), then use Display>Set view port image to navigate to the 'front' image. I click into another view, then go to Right view (press 6) and do the same to import the side view. You can add a cube to the scene to help you get the layout right.



3 Edit tools

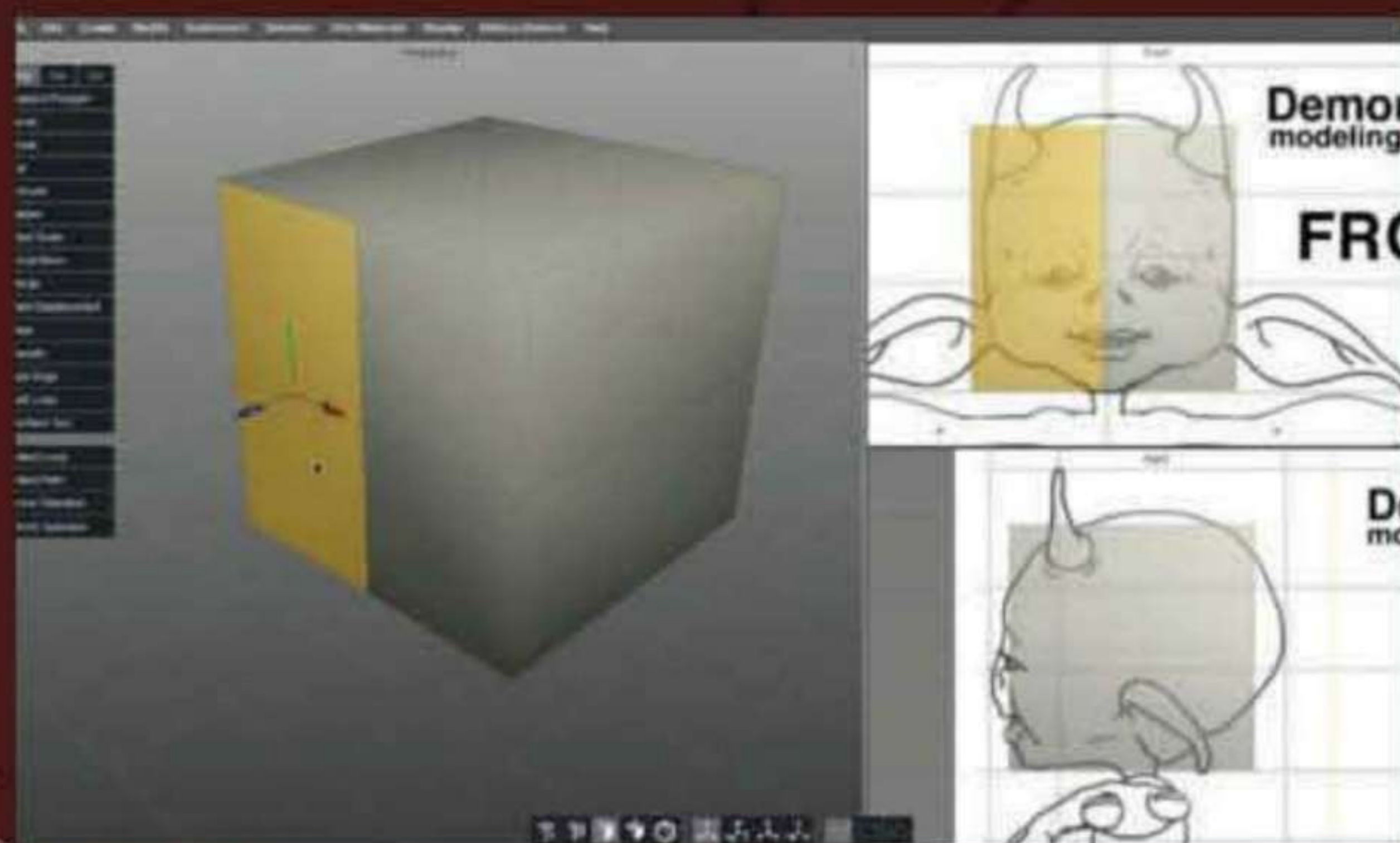
Silo needs very little configuring, but one thing I always set up is the ability to smooth your model with a mouse wheel roll. To do this, select Editors/Options>Mouse settings and click Scroll. Look down for Ctrl+Shift and set that to Smooth. Save the settings to have a smooth tool slaved to your middle mouse button.



1 Preparing reference images

Before I can create my little demon I prepare some reference images. These are sketches of the character that show him from the front and the side, giving me a template to build from. I prepare them as shown, but split them into two images. I try to draw the character in a similar pose to the one shown with his arms out and his head looking straight ahead. Grid lines help to keep things level.



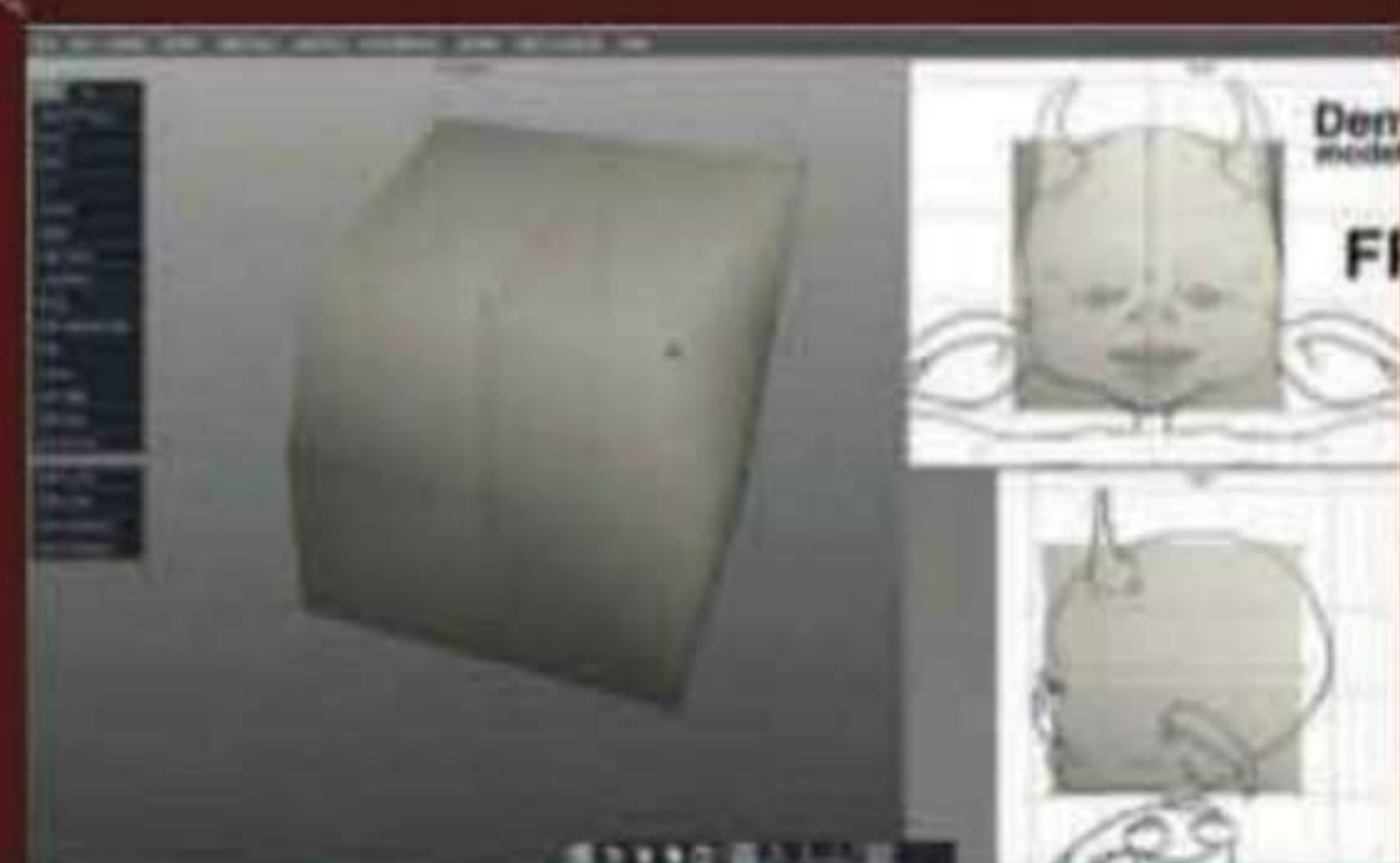


4 Starting from a cube

All box modelling starts from a basic primitive shape. I'll be using a cube. I right-click and load a basic cube, before going into Edge mode (S) and clicking a front horizontal edge. Shift+X will split the cube in half. I go to Face mode (D), and select and delete the whole left-hand side of the cube.

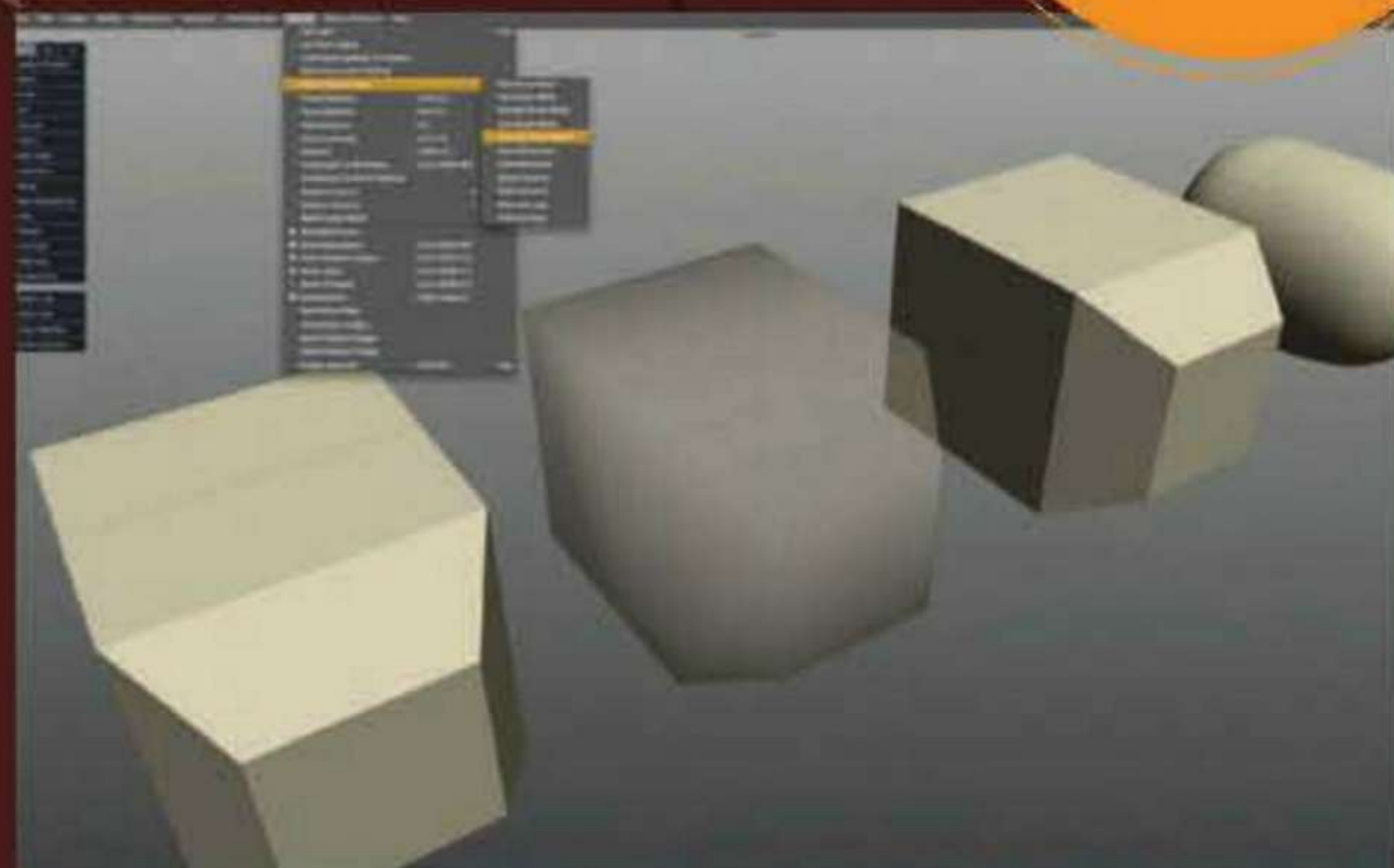
5 Mirror techniques

There are two types of mirroring in Silo. Instance mirror (Modify>Mirror>Instance mirror toggle) gives you a reflected version of your mesh across the X-axis. You can't edit this reflected half, but you can turn it off and on. The other way is mirror geometry (Modify>Mirroring>Mirror geometry) that flips the mesh across the axis and welds it together. This can be edited on either side. I'll be using Mirrored geometry from now on.



6 Display modes

You can view your model in several ways. To model, and for most jobs, I use Flat mode (Display>Object display mode>Flat shade). While box modelling I sometimes need to see through the mesh, so I switch to Ghosted mode from the same panel. While in there I can switch to Smooth shade and turn the wireframe on and off as required.



PRO SECRETS

Learn to refine your model

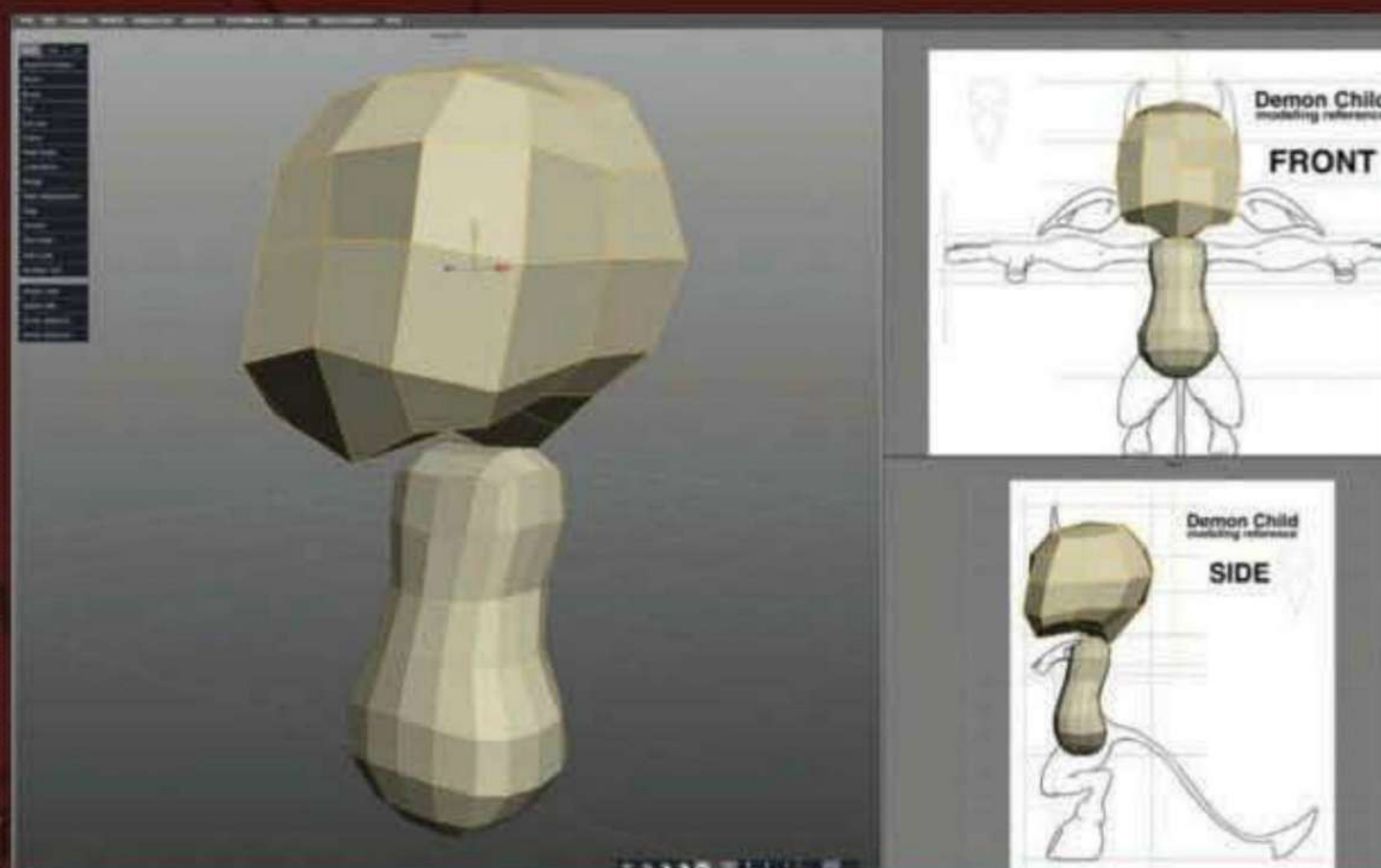
Become a master of Tweak and Smooth. The secret to organic modelling is the ability to make believable creatures and characters by creating accurate anatomy. If you can tweak your mesh quickly and accurately and have access to a powerful smooth tool, you can refine your models in no time at all. Get to grips with creating good topology and then keep your models smooth and tight.

Shortcuts

Extrude

Z (PC & Mac)

The core of this creature workshop is done using the Extrude command to create new geometry.



7 Head and body

Using the mirrored cube I make the head and body. I split the head a couple of times vertically and horizontally (go into Edge mode, click the edge and then press Shift+X to split), before selecting the whole head (F). The smooth function tightens the head. Now I make another cube, select the top face and extrude upwards (Z) a few times. I smooth that mesh a little to tighten it and round it off.

8 Apply Soft selection

To see the mesh smoothed I can temporally subdivide it (C); to reverse this step press V. When in Sub-d mode I can match the model to the reference in the front and right views. To do this you may need to switch on soft selection (Selection>Soft selection), which acts as a magnet and has an area of effect. Make sure you're in Ghosted mode to make the model transparent.

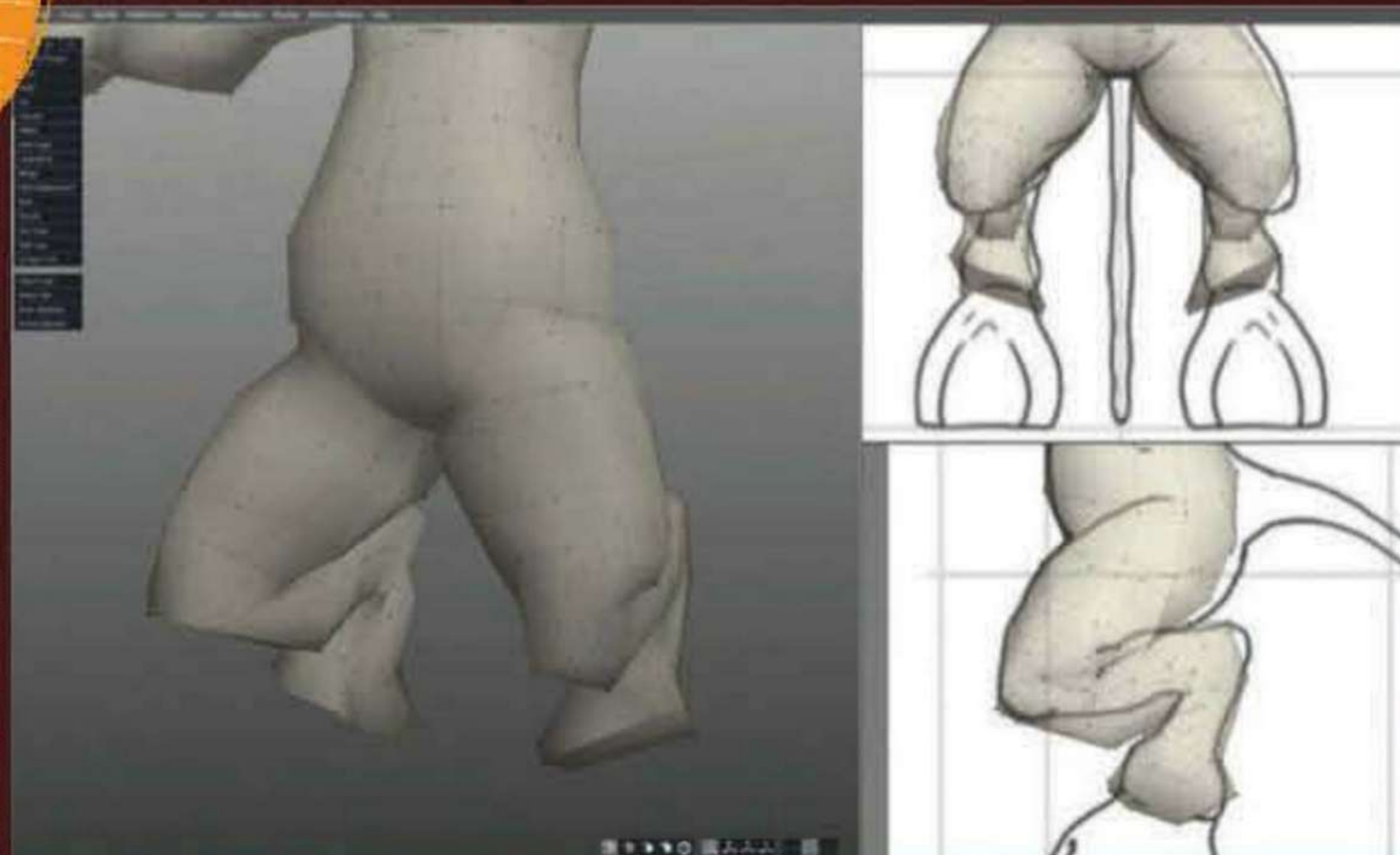


9 Extruding the arms

I select two polygons at the shoulder, extrude out once and tweak the points to form the shape of the arm. I keep extruding out to form the elbow and forearm, and do the same to create two fingers and a thumb. I then tweak the shape to match the reference images. I press C to look at the model subdivided and match the reference in this mode.

10 Extruding the legs

I select polygons on the lower body and begin to extrude downwards. Once I reach the knee area I turn the polygons back on themselves (press E to rotate) and extrude backwards to the ankle joint. Then I extrude and turn these down and onto the hoof area. To make the hoof I extrude down a scale to match the reference. I tweak the model and switch Soft selection on and off as required, while pushing points into the mesh.



Shortcuts

Move, Scale and Rotate

W, E and R (PC & Mac)
Always follow an extrude with a Move, Scale or Rotate command.

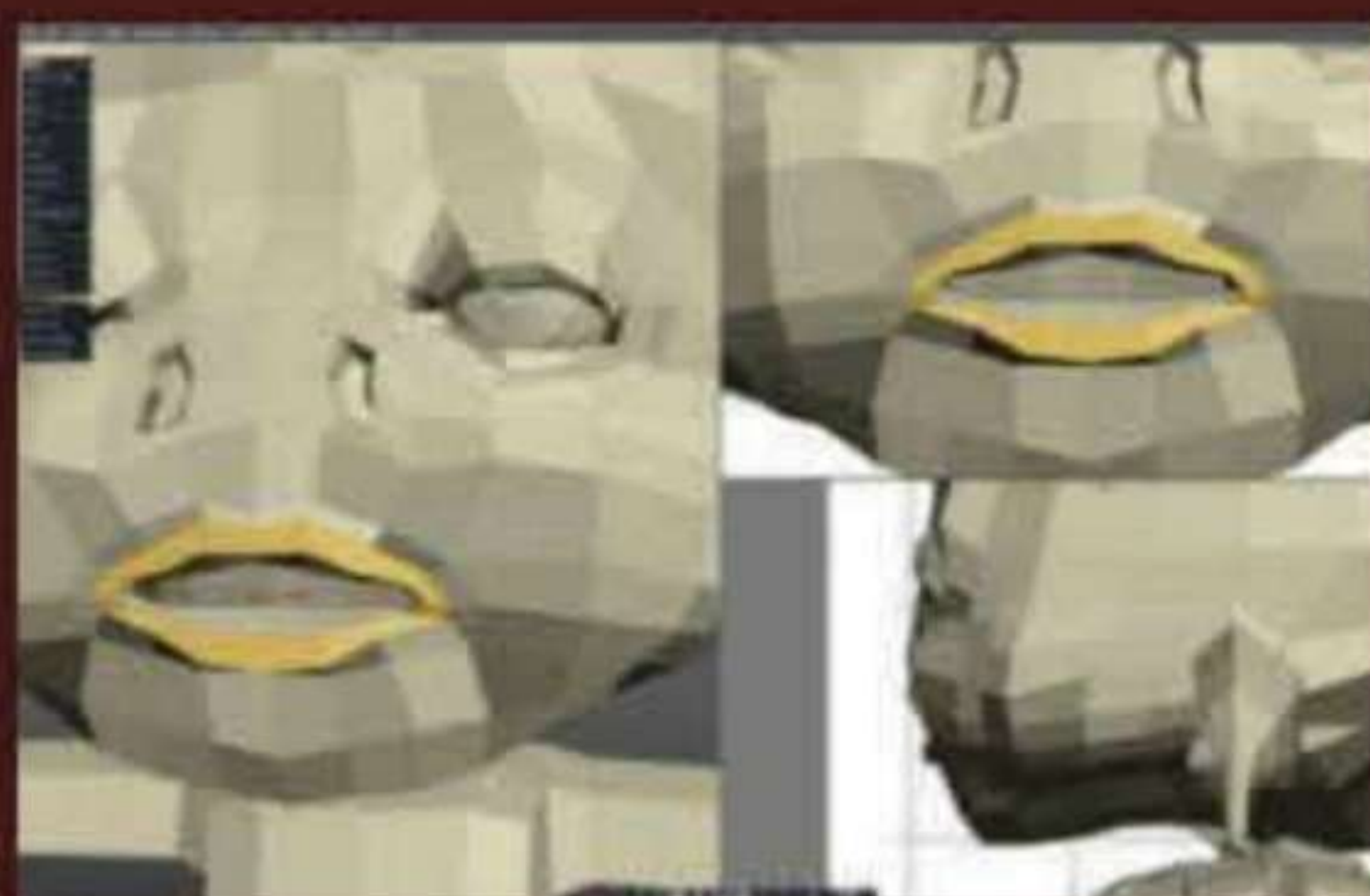
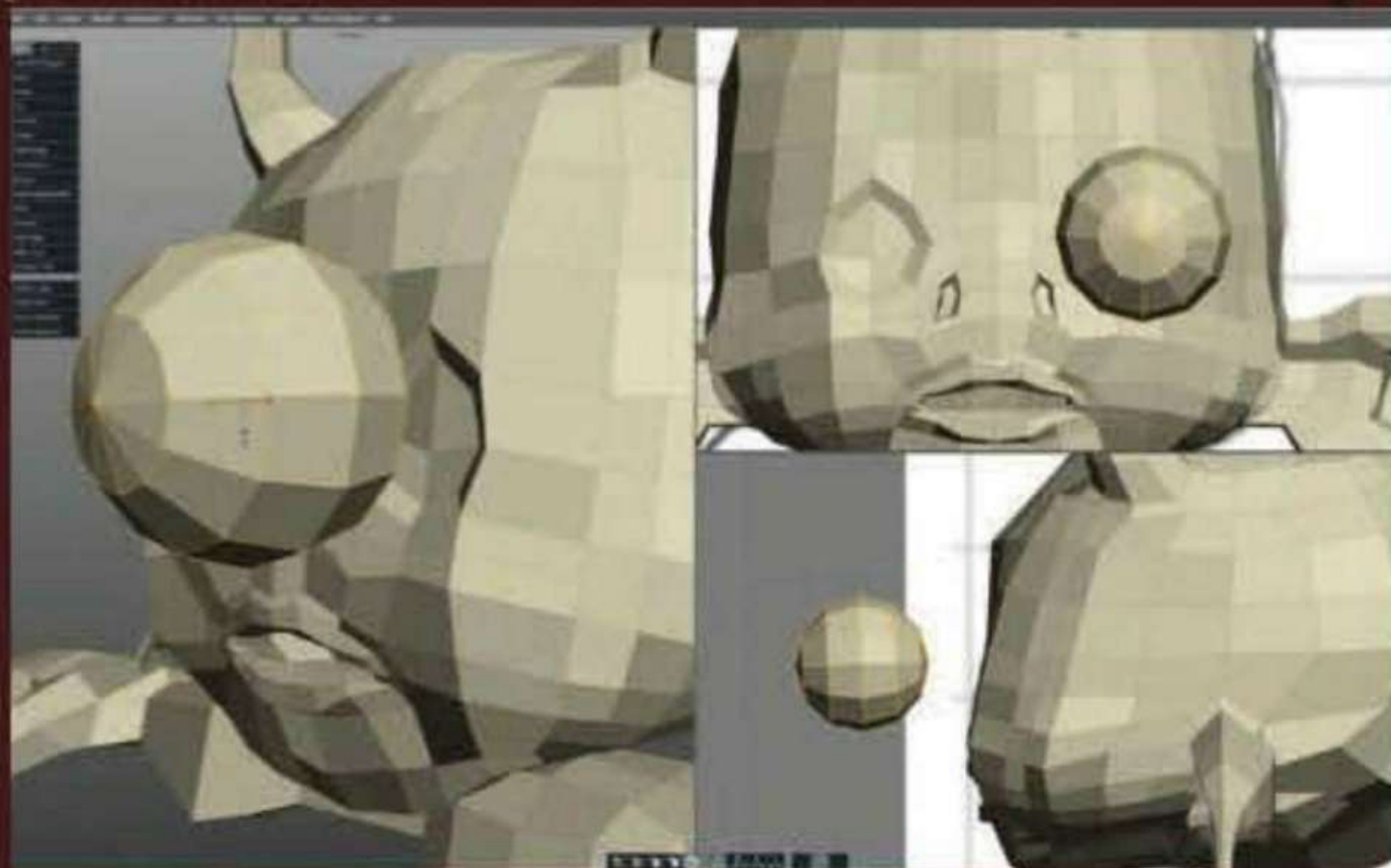


11 Creating the ear

I select the head model (F), then switch into Face mode (D) and select polygons roughly where the ear will be. If the head needs more polygons I split around a few times first. I extrude the ear outwards several times following the front reference images, while moving, scaling and rotating as necessary. I extrude all the way to the end. Selecting the front polygons and extruding, I scale these down then before extruding again inwards into the ear.

12 Making the eyes

To make the eyes I create a new object by right-clicking to generate a sphere. I rotate it forwards and scale it to fit the head. On the head model I select the polygons where the eye will be and extrude inwards once. I then scale down and extrude again several times. Now I place the eyeball into the socket and by tweaking and using a combination of soft selection and smooth, I'm able to shape the eyelid. This step is a little tricky to get right.



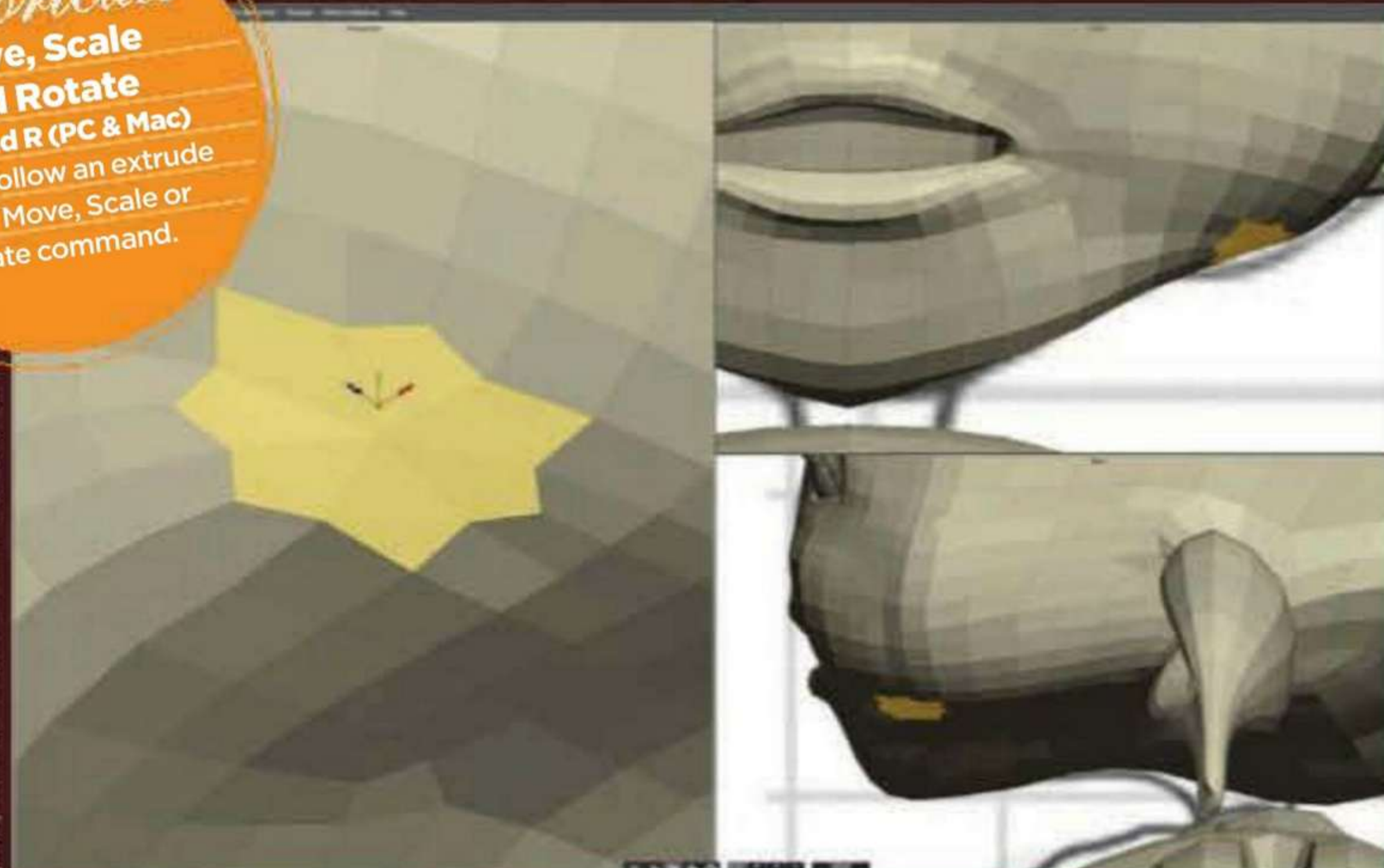
13 The mouth and nose

The key thing with the mouth and nose is to keep the polygon flow around these areas. For the mouth I select the central polygons and extrude in and scale a few times. I tweak the lip shape to match the reference image and tighten the edge of the mouth to form a crease. For the nasal cavity I simply extrude in and tweak as necessary, remembering to use Smooth to tighten areas.

PRO SECRETS

Think in three dimensions

To understand 3D modelling you have to become comfortable moving around in 3D space. Learn how to zoom in and out, how to pan left and right in a scene and how to rotate your point of view and move around your objects. If you can navigate around the modelling area effectively then you'll be able to create models quicker and more efficiently, because you're not spending time navigating the space.

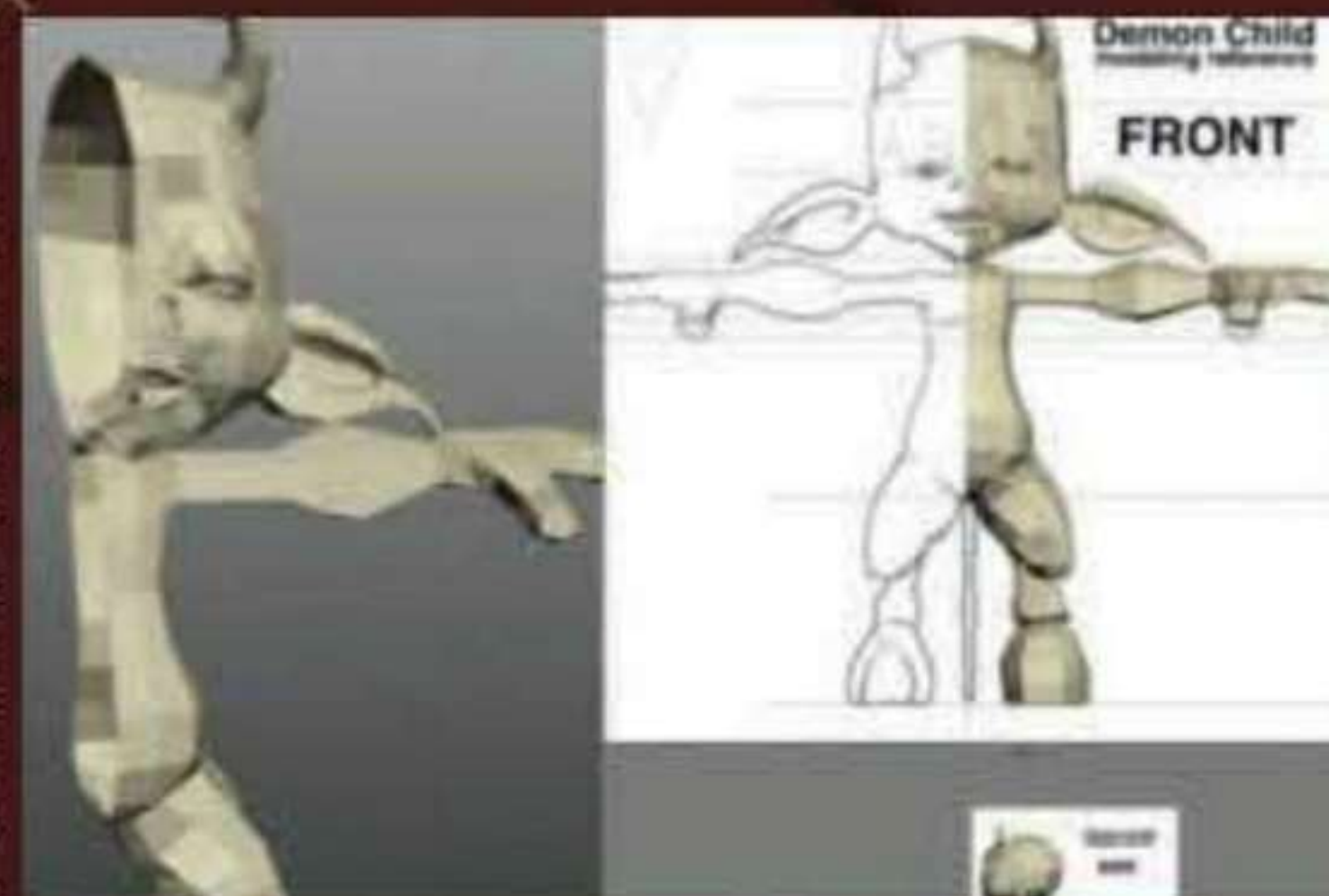


14 Cutting and splitting

The model needs to be 100 per cent quads if possible. Sometimes you need more geometry in a certain areas. Cut new edges into the mesh by pressing X and delete edges as needed. Never leave an N-Gon in your mesh (a polygon with more than four sides) because they don't work in all software. Get into the habit of testing your mesh regularly by pressing C and reverting back with V.

15 Joining objects

I select and delete half of the body and head. I enter Object mode (F), select both objects (Shift), and right-click to combine the two. I delete two polygons on the top of the neck and two on the bottom of the head, before selecting two points on the head and two on the body. Then I press P. I repeat this around the neck. I then re-mirror the body across.

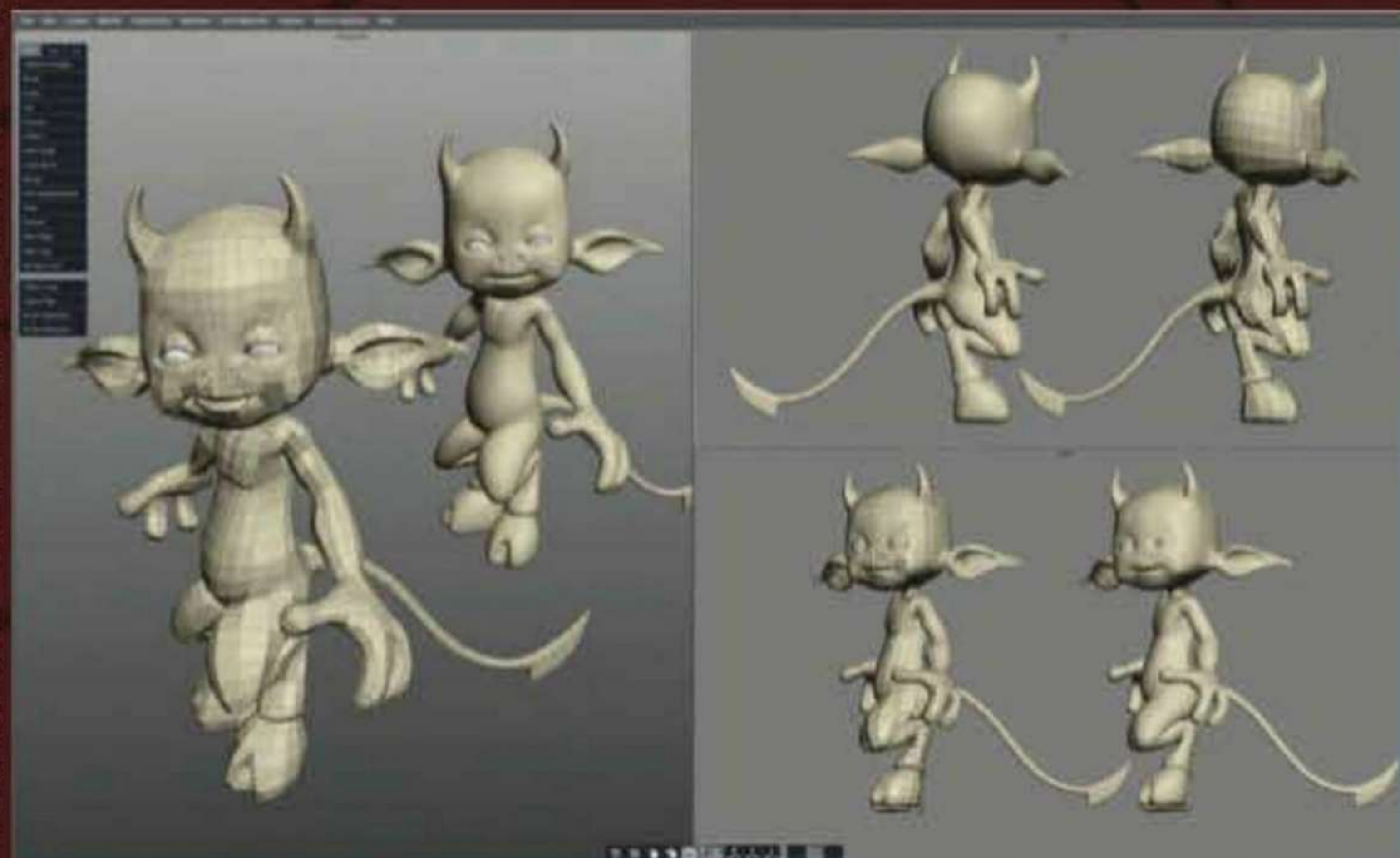


16 Creating a tail

The tail needs to be extruded out from the base of the body, so I select the polygons at the bottom of the back and start to extrude outwards. I continue extruding and moving while keeping an eye on the side view. Once I reach the end I go back to where the arrow head begins and extrude downwards. Using a combination of cut, split and smooth I match the tail tip to my reference.

17 Posing

When a model is created in the classic T-pose it can look sterile. The solution is to pose the mesh and break the symmetry, so that you see the figure in action. This can be done by selecting parts of the mesh and rotating them. Using Soft selection helps to get the joints positioned correctly. The base mesh is now ready to be UV'd and then onto ZBrush for texturing and sculpting if required.





Photoshop CRAFT A HAUNTING FANTASY PORTRAIT

Anna Dittmann takes you through the process of painting an ethereal character, from establishing the pose to tackling colour and lighting

Artist PROFILE

Anna Dittmann
COUNTRY: US



Anna is a 17-year-old illustrator living in San Francisco. She

discovered digital art a few years back and instantly fell in love with the medium. This past year she's become more serious about her art and now specialises in painting portraits.

escume.deviantart.com

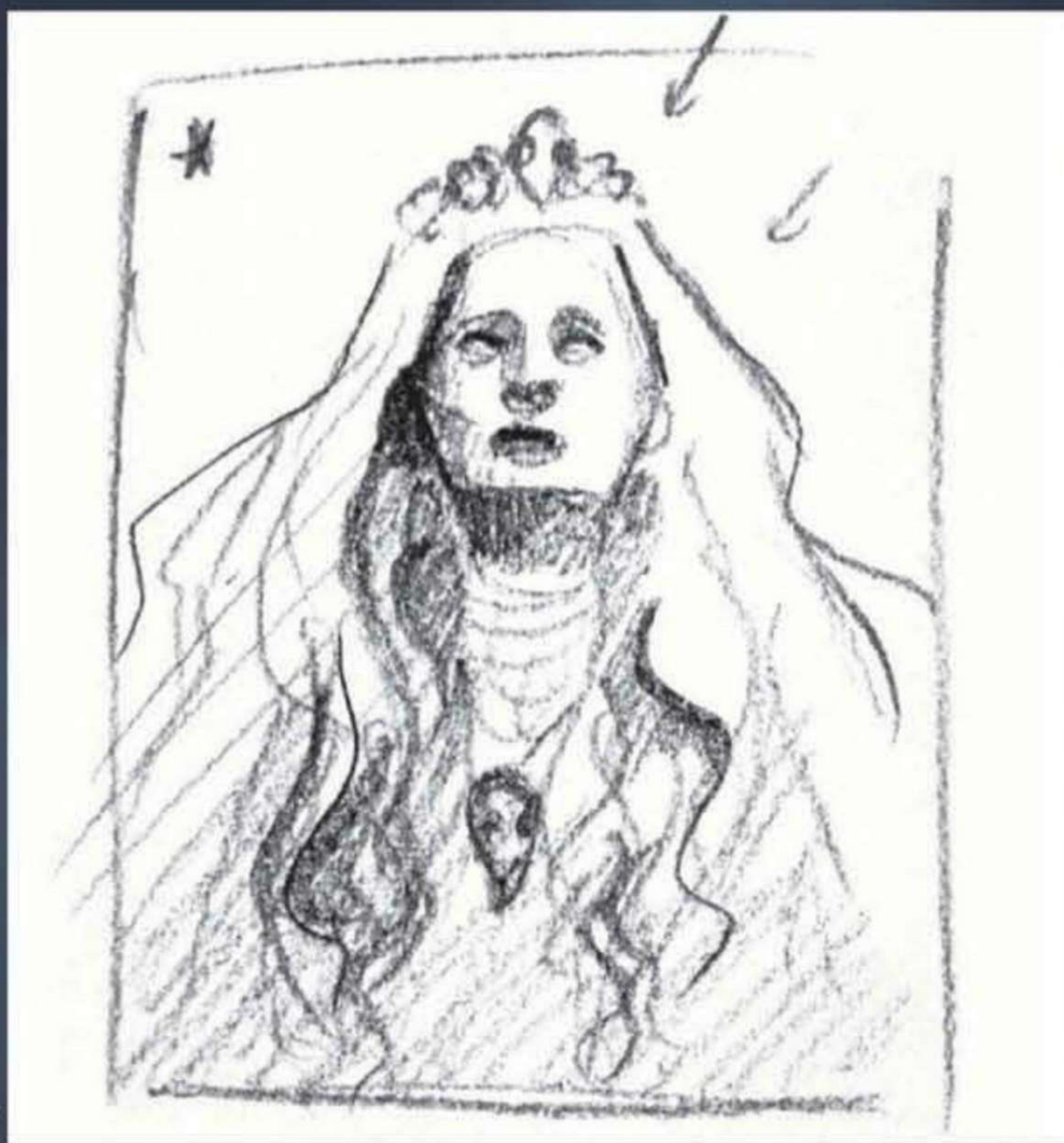
DVD Assets

The files you need are in the Anna Dittmann folder in the Workshops section.

I've always found the human figure to be the most fascinating aspect in any art piece. In particular, I'm constantly drawn to the face. Even as a kid, many of my doodles would be portraits of characters and I'd fantasise about their personalities and backgrounds. Years later and I still tend to focus on portraits because they create an immediate emotional connection through the stories they can tell.

Throughout this workshop, I'll take you through my process of creating a haunting female portrait. I'll explain how I establish the concept early on, and explore colour and lighting. I'll also walk you through the technical aspects of portraiture including character construction and handy Photoshop tricks. My steps aren't normally concrete, because I tend to move around a lot throughout the image, working on various parts simultaneously.

I constantly try to look at my piece with a fresh perspective by changing the colours, flipping the canvas or asking for outside opinions. If you sense that the process is becoming tedious, don't be afraid to take creative risks and dramatically change the feel of the image. With that in mind, feel free to explore portraits as dynamic rather than static illustrations. Digital art is great for experimentation and portraits are a great technical and creative challenge.



1 Concept and sketch

Coming up with a concept for a portrait can be difficult. I start by incorporating stories into my pieces. Think about what will draw a viewer into the image. What components generate curiosity? To create an eerie atmosphere, I want the elements to contradict. I choose the depiction of a bird skull to contrast with the woman's youth and the flowers in her headdress, and organise these ideas by producing a few sketches.



2 Blocking in colour

I create most of my pieces spontaneously, but when planning in advance, I choose a sketch to determine the composition. Using it as guideline, I loosely lay down colours. I start off on a smaller canvas to paint quickly with large brush strokes. I don't worry much about refinement and colour because I'll determine the lighting and detail later.

3 References sources

References are important for visualising elements that you aren't familiar with. For facial features, I find that looking in a mirror is more helpful than viewing photos, because you can control the lighting and structure. On the other hand, certain objects that are less accessible can be easily found online. ➔

ON THE
DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

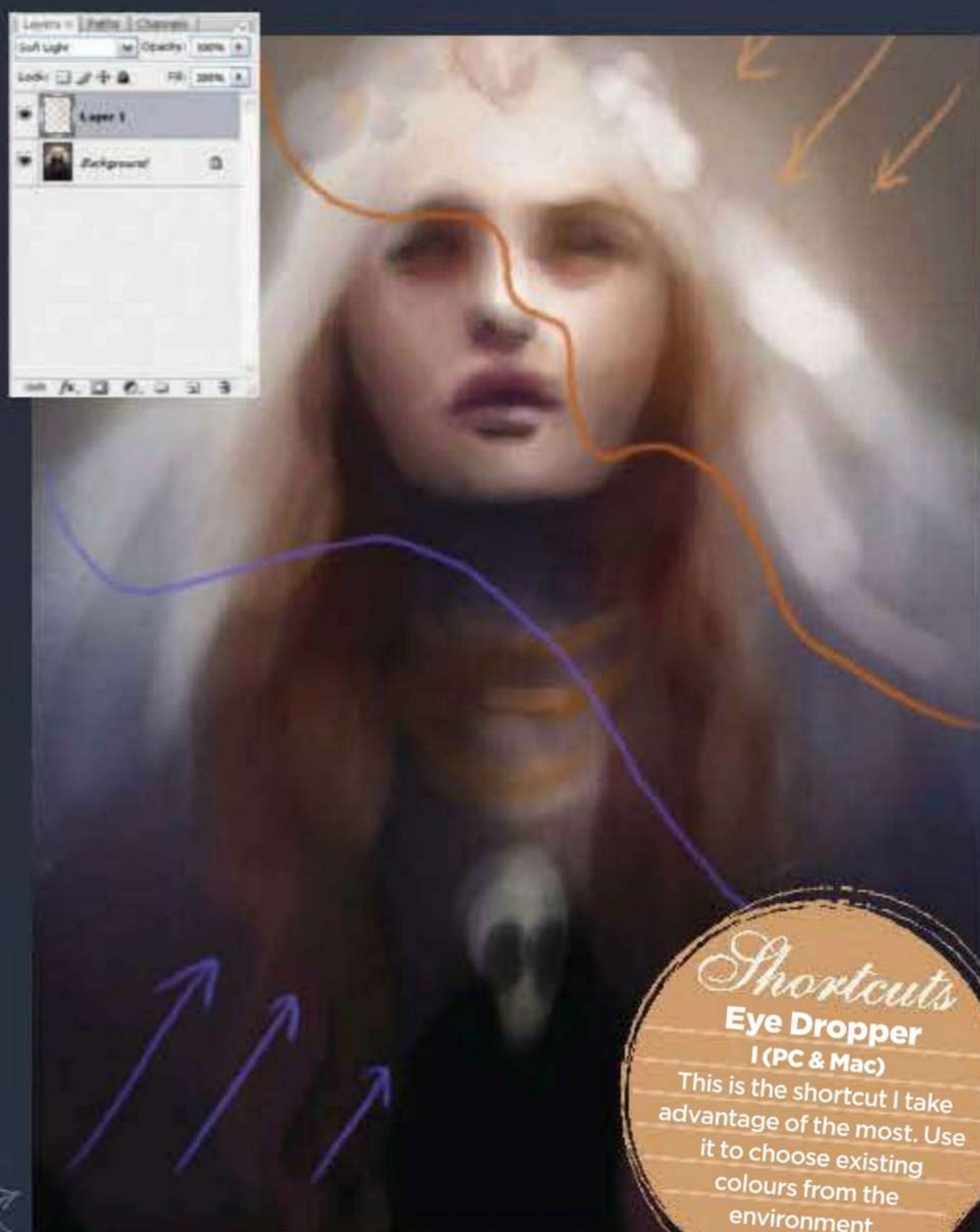
CUSTOM BRUSHES: CHALK BRUSH

This brush is great at adding texture. I use it to block in the background colour and hint at detail.

SOFT OVAL BRUSH

I tend to use this brush throughout my process because it provides a certain amount of softness without sacrificing texture.





Shortcuts Eye Dropper

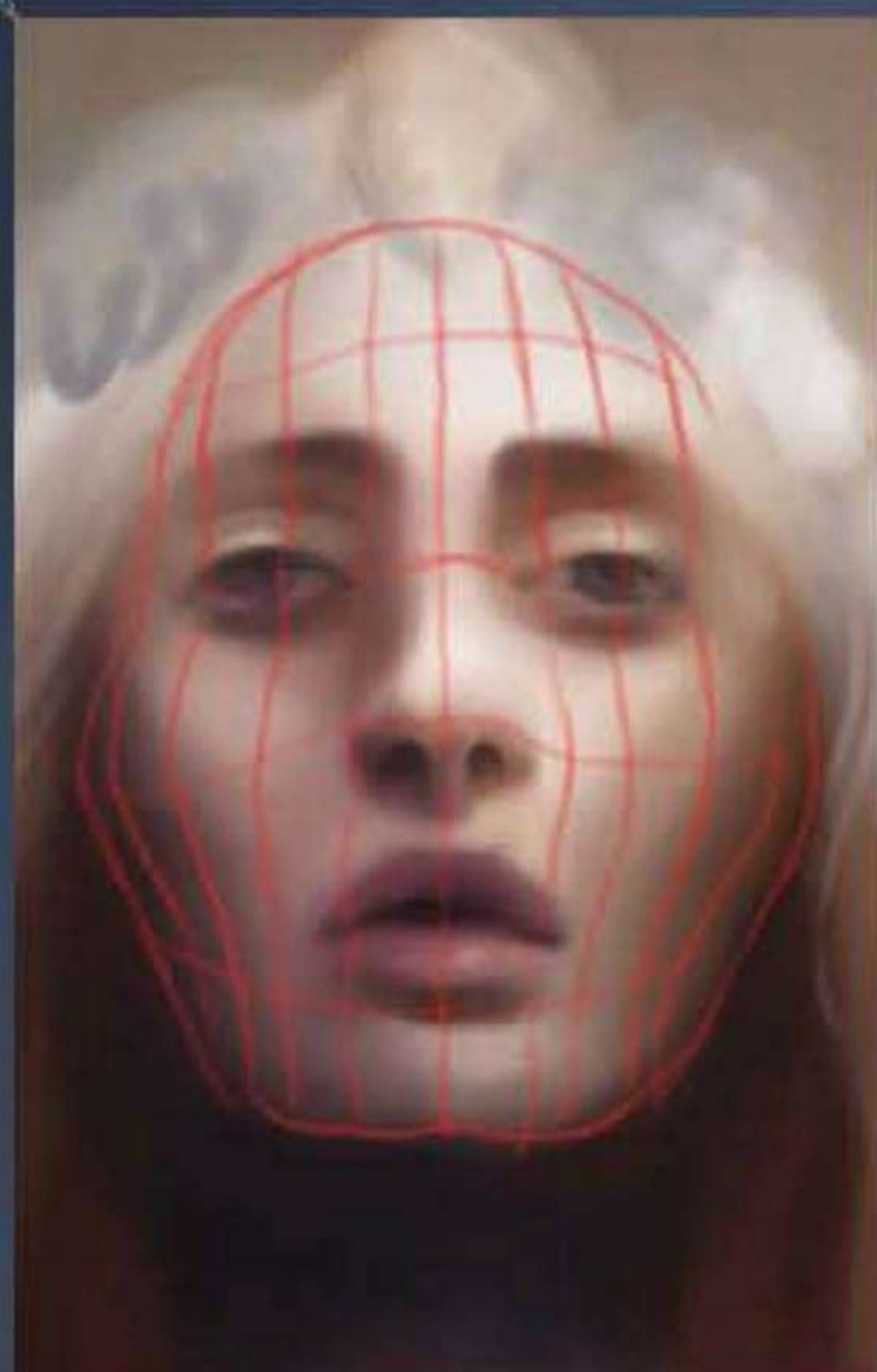
I (PC & Mac)
This is the shortcut I take advantage of the most. Use it to choose existing colours from the environment.

4 Establishing lighting

This is one of my favourite steps because the lighting will dictate the portrait's atmosphere. I add more contrast to make the character more dramatic, and establish in which direction the light will fall. To feel authentic, every aspect in the portrait needs to respond accurately to the light source. One way to add ambience is by creating a new layer and setting it to Soft Light. On this layer, I select a saturated orange to block in highlights and choose a darker blue for shadows.

5 Facial structure

Every face you paint will vary and one of the most rudimentary differences people often overlook is the structure. The facial structure determines where light will fall and where facial features are situated. In this case the structure can also reinforce the concept. I want her face to be very skull-like with prominent cheekbones and deep-set eyes, to emphasise the haunted feeling. Envisioning guidelines for a three-dimensional face is often helpful.



PRO SECRETS

Work minimally

I always try minimising the amount of layers and brushes I use. Working with too many layers can slow down your computer and make brushstrokes sluggish. At the same time it can make the process more confusing and unnatural. The same goes for brushes. Find a small set of brushes that can encompass many different uses. Of course, every painting might call for a different brush, but if you rely too much on your brushes for detail work, your piece can end up looking artificial.

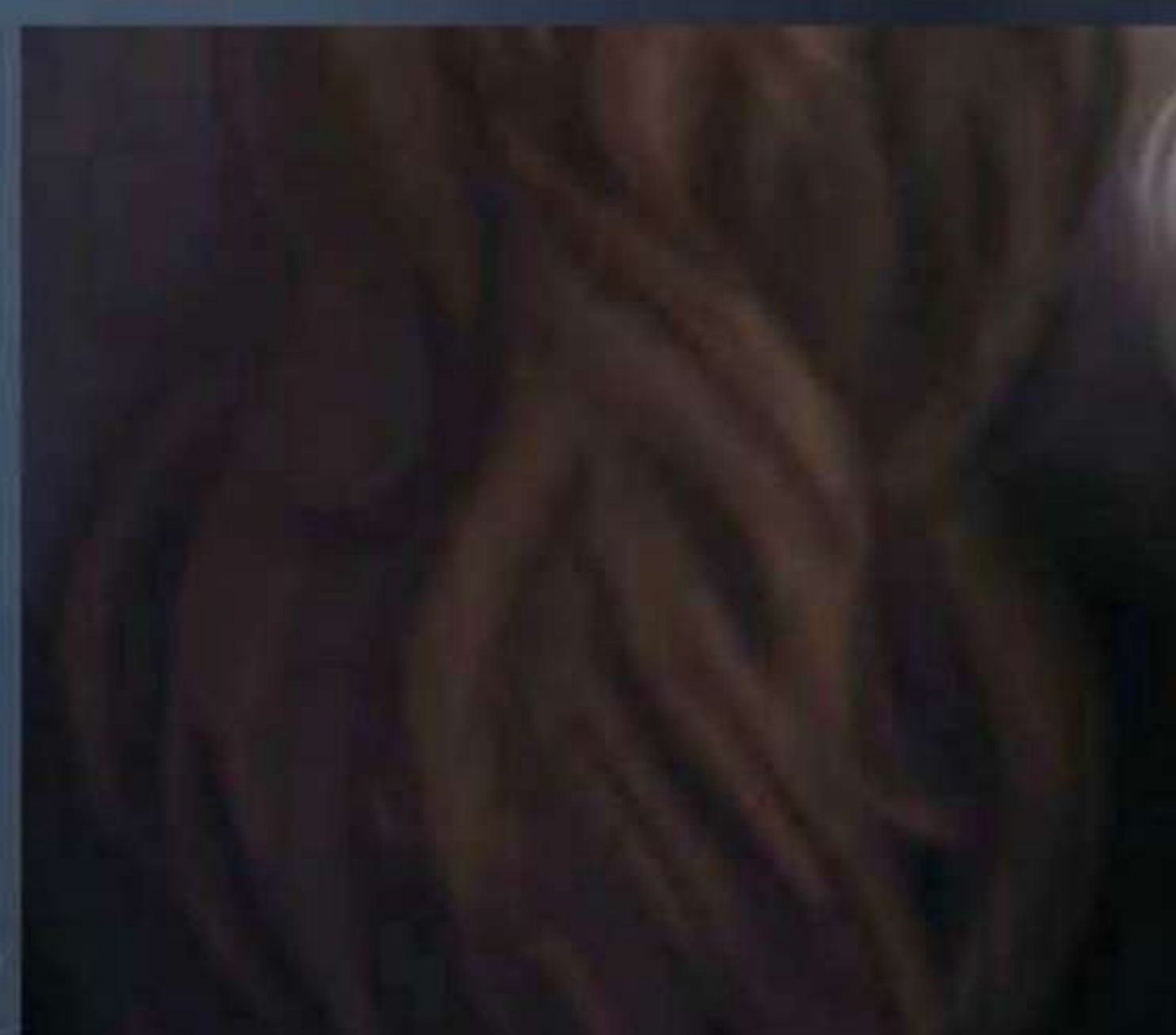


6 Expression

The woman's expression is perhaps the most crucial stage because it provides the emotional focus of the portrait. I quickly shape the facial features and add more contrast to the face. At this stage, I concentrate more on structuring the character's gaze rather than going into detail. To portray a sense of helplessness and exhaustion, I focus on her eyes. Painting them only partially open with dark circles under the lower lids makes the character look more vulnerable.

7 Brushes

At the beginning of a painting I block in the background with a chalk brush to add texture. I occasionally use this brush throughout the process to increase roughness on smooth surfaces. However, an ethereal portrait calls for softer brushes, so I often use an airbrush and a custom oval brush with textured yet soft edges. I use the streaky brush minimally for hair and skin texture.



8 Hair strategy

A character's hair can be hard to paint because of its texture. Moreover, the many different hair types and styles can make it tricky to find a technical consistency. Start off with a soft, dark base and add blocks of lighter colour where the locks will fall, before applying more detail using a streaky brush to enhance smaller strands. Use textured brushes sparingly. Layer your own hair texture on top to prevent the hair from appearing artificial. Painting random strands and flyaways can add volume and life to hair.



9 Adding cohesion

When elements begin to look disconnected, it's helpful to take a step back and re-evaluate your portrait. All aspects of a piece need to work together and interact with one another in a realistic manner. Creating a separate layer on Soft Light is not only great at establishing lighting, it also helps create cohesion. Selecting colours from nearby objects and applying them around the piece on the Soft Light layer mode produces a more believable colour effect.

10 Painting the veil

Cloth can be difficult to get right so it helps to drape fabric somewhere around your workstation; painting from life enables you to easily position the cloth to achieve your desired affect. Working with a veil is new to me because of its translucency, so I begin by working softly and creating a loose outline. The fabric becomes denser around the various folds and bends, so I use lighter colours. As such, where fabric is the least dense it's also the least opaque. I pick colours from the rest of the environment to mimic this translucency effect.



In depth Craft a haunting portrait

Shortcuts

Auto Levels

Shift+Ctrl+L (PC)

Shift+Cmd+L (Mac)

Use this handy tool to experiment with interesting colour and contrast effects.



11 Creating detail

As the overall piece becomes more detailed, I return to the face and hair. I increase the amount of individual strands in the hair and review the face. Changing the eye colour and adding texture to the lips gives the character a more lifelike quality. I use the streaky brush at a scattering of 1000 per cent on a separate Overlay mode layer at a low opacity to create pores. Including moles and blemishes also makes the skin appear more natural and realistic.

12 Refining the jewellery

I begin detailing the character's necklace. Understanding the way metal reflects light by observing its properties is the key. In this case, I add a lot of shine and increase the contrast. I start with a dull base and add lighter, more saturated colours on each layer. Small imperfections and dots are great at creating texture.



13 Bone structure

The two skulls are still vague blobs of colours, so I contour and refine them. After shaping their outlines I paint using colours from around their environment. The skulls are the roughest feature within the portrait, so I go over their surfaces loosely with a textured brush and add small dents to their surfaces.

14 Flower detail

I want to add flowers on the headdress to contrast with the skull. I sketch out each petal and then refine them with lines and bends on their surfaces. I add a saturated colour to their centres to accentuate them. I also return to the top of the veil and define the folds. I feel that the headdress needs more emphasis, so I include decorative pearls.



15 Rotate, Transform and Warp

Flipping the canvas horizontally is helpful when painting a portrait. It helps you view the painting from a fresh perspective; here, it's useful for fixing facial imperfections as well as incorrect prop alignments. I notice that the headdress is slightly lopsided, so I make a copy of the background layer, set the feather to at least 20, select the problem area and transform it. If transform isn't precise enough to solve the problem, go to Edit>Transform>Warp and play around with the settings until you've achieved your desired effect.



16 Background

For most portraits it's a good idea not to go crazy with the background details in case it detracts from the character. I want the background to remain fairly simplistic, but I go over the edges with a dark, soft brush to create more focus around the face. I also make the light nearest to the headdress brighter. I end by making the background a green tone, drawing attention to the character.

17 Final touches

After I finish all the important pieces of the image and feel like it's reaching an end, it can be helpful take a break from the piece for a little while to re-evaluate certain areas. When I feel satisfied, I wrap it up and call it a day. It's finally finished!



ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: ROUND AIRBRUSH

This is a basic airbrush that I often use for blending as well as for softer materials such as the veil.

STREAKY BRUSH

I use this brush sparingly for hair texture as well as skin texture. To create pores, I set this brush to a very high scattering.

PRO SECRETS

Colour tricks

If the colour scheme becomes too dull then Auto Color/Levels can add a new dynamic to the piece. Create a copy of your background layer, try out one of these effects and adjust the opacity. Softly erasing various parts of this layer to reveal the warmer background layer can also achieve great results.

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masterclass**Dave Kendall helps you
get more from Painter 12
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Photoshop

PAINT A SCI-FI SPACE SCENE



Ensure you have clear goals and fresh inspiration when tackling a sci-fi illustration. **Mike McCain** takes the helm

Space – the final frontier, and a constant source of inspiration and wonder. As a big space and starship geek (thank you, Star Wars), I'd probably be happy painting nothing but space scenes for the rest of my career. So I was pretty excited when Claire agreed to this choice of theme! However, a good illustration requires the same combination of ideas, inspiration and skills regardless of subject matter. I'm constantly learning new things about painting and trying to improve my workflow, so in this workshop I want to share the best advice I can about the artistic process in general, in addition to some specific points about working with space subject matter.

Before we dive in, you can't paint a space scene without looking at John Berkey's work. Just glancing at one of his paintings is enough to bring on a paralyzing "I'm not worthy" moment! His brushwork and command of colour is incredible. What's more, his art still seems fresh and compelling, in a genre where popular aesthetic has drastically changed over the decades. Inspired (and humbled) by the scale and depth of his work, I'll attempt to illustrate a grand space scene of my own.

Painting science-fiction subject matter is a lot of fun, but it can be challenging to create something new in a genre already so rich with inspiring visions of the future. With this piece, I'll try to bring a fresh aesthetic to the work. You can decide whether the result here accomplishes that!

Artist PROFILE

Mike McCain

Country: US



Mike caught the art bug in college, escaping with a degree while

spending most of his time drawing or buried in Photoshop. Mike then graduated in 2007 and currently heads up an art team of one at Moonshot Games in Seattle.

mikebot.net

DVD Assets



The files you need are on your DVD in the Mike McCain folder in Workshop.

1 Paint with purpose

It's easy to become lost in the mechanics of painting, but good work requires clear goals. You should have an idea in mind before you set pen to paper, or stylus to tablet. Brainstorm at the gym, while grabbing coffee... anywhere that's removed from your workplace. This way you'll have plenty of ideas to explore once you're back at your desk. Always ask yourself: what's the core idea I want to convey? Why am I making this, and for whom? What kind of emotional response am I after? Art is about communicating with the viewer.

2 Get inspired

Rewatching Kingdom of Heaven, I'm again captivated by the beauty of Ridley Scott's medieval landscapes. Stuck in my head is the image of knights riding forth from a castle – I want to try to evoke a similar emotion in this piece. Drawing inspiration from a contrasting genre like this can be a great way to find a fresh approach to your work. That said, use your influences with tact. Don't just paint space knights!

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: ROUGHER_SMUDGY

I use this to soften edges without them becoming too muddy. Here I use it for the nebula and ground plane.

NICE_FUZZY_TEXTURE

This is a great brush for painting soft shapes with subtle textures. This is also my default eraser.

SCATTER_SQUARES

A quick way to generate randomly sized and rotated squares. I use this to add some subtle detail in the calmer areas of this piece.

4 Values first

Time to get more specific about what things are and where they are. I bring my thumbnail into its own document and start refining my shapes and values. I'm still working small and not trying to get too detailed – just more accurate. I'm not using any colour yet. While starting with colour can work great, lately I've been happier refining the values and drawing of a piece before adding colour.



5 Get some perspective

It's important to ensure that your perspective is correct early on. This is easiest with a guide! Find or make a large grid image and use the Perspective Transformation tool to bend it into place. This scene calls for a basic two-point perspective setup, so I draw a horizon line and then transform two grids into place, one for each vanishing point. You can set these to Multiply or Screen mode, and quickly toggle the layers as needed while you work.

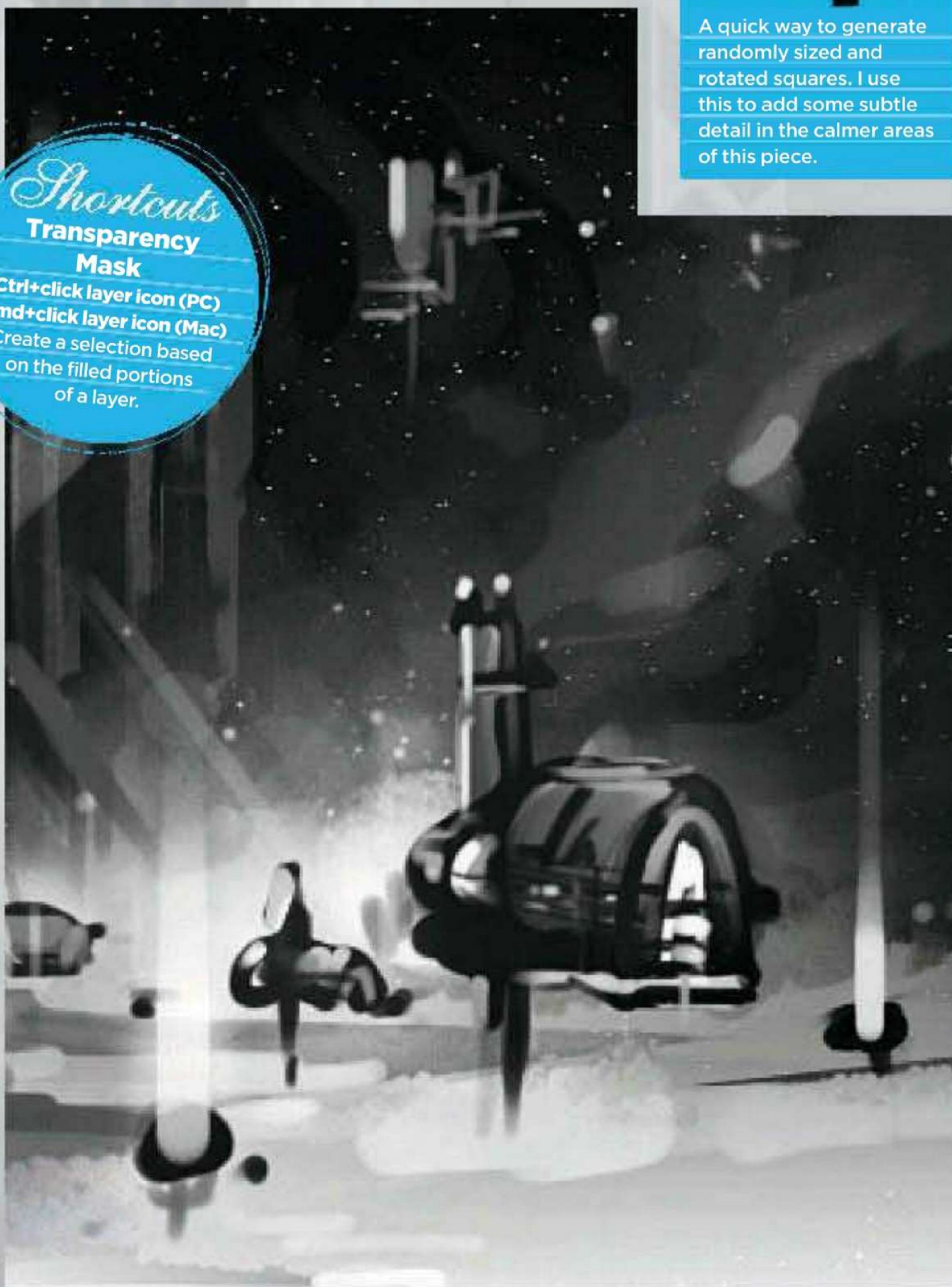


3 Thumbnail sketches

I need a composition that best communicates this idea. I start with some greyscale thumbnails, working small – these are strictly for planning the overall read of the image. I want the lead ship to be the main focal point, with the fortress entrance as a secondary read, so I design my lighting and values accordingly. I find a composition that I like pretty quickly, but don't be afraid to try several thumbnails. Rushing into a flawed composition only causes headaches later.

Shortcuts Transparency Mask

Ctrl+click layer icon (PC)
Cmd+click layer icon (Mac)
Create a selection based
on the filled portions
of a layer.





6 Control values with gradients

I'm pretty happy with the scene, but the ships aren't drawing enough attention. I create an Overlay layer and drop some gradients on it to shift my values around. I use a dark Linear gradient along the top of the image to darken my background values, and a bright Radial gradient near the foreground ships. Overlay mode is fantastic for this, because your gradients won't become obvious shapes in the image – you'll just be subtly adjusting the overall lighting as required.



7 Time for some colour

Before moving on to colour, I flatten the image. I tend to create a lot of layers when trying things out (think of it as a nonlinear Undo) but it's vital not to get bogged down. For this piece, I'll keep the foreground ships on their own layer and flatten everything else. I then create a new Overlay layer and start putting down colour. Gradients are a great way to start.

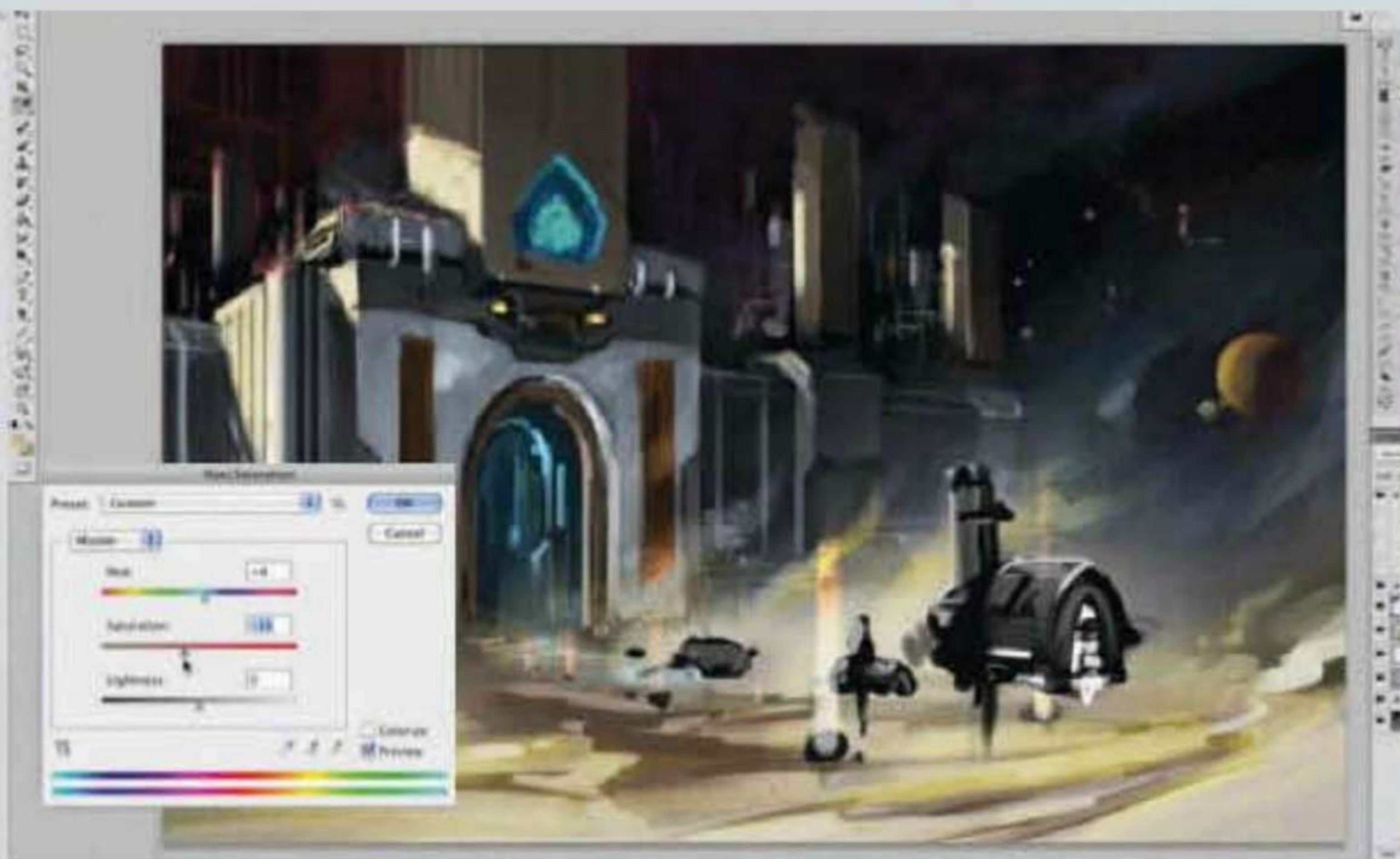


8 Keep values in check

There are a few dangers with using an Overlay layer to add colour. First, if your greyscale image already had very light and dark areas, adding light and dark colours on your overlay will likely blow out your values. An easy fix is to place a new, grey layer between the overlay and your painting. Adjust this to a low opacity or brightness until your value range looks good again.

9 Carefully control saturation

It's easy to become too saturated too quickly. Be sparing with saturation at first, and use the Hue/Saturation adjustment to desaturate. You can always add back in more saturated areas. Saving your most saturated colours for focal points and accents gives your image more depth and a wider perceived range of colour. In this case, I want to make my blues and oranges really stand out.



10 Size-up, merge-down

An Overlay layer is a great way to add colour, but it's just a starting point. When it becomes more trouble than it's worth, I simply flatten again and continue painting colour directly. At this point I also upscale the image to its final print dimensions. I've been deliberately waiting to do this: working in a low-resolution document forces you to avoid detailing the piece until you've solved the usual problems with value, colour, shape and composition.



11 Painting space

I've Googled some nebula reference images for the background. Nebulae are massive clouds of ionised gas, with stars within, so diffuse lighting is the key here. A good approach is to paint pockets of smooth colour and then partially overlap them with darker gas clouds. I want a good contrast of soft lighting and harder cloud edges that fit with the image's overall composition.

PRO SECRETS

Fun with lassos
If you want to create some random, interesting shapes then try the Lasso Selection tool. Scribble randomly with it to create a complex selection, and then selectively paint within that selection. You may need to experiment a few times to get the hang of it. Don't forget to paint out and edit the result – it's just a starting point, after all. Combine the results with gradients and the Perspective Transform tool to create a quick and interesting ground plane.



12 Painting more space

It's not space without stars! It may be tempting to place a starfield texture and move on, but quality counts more than quantity here. I accent areas of the nebula with larger points of light of various colours. (Stars appear as different colours according to their wavelength – a starfield is not black and white!) Setting your brush to Linear Dodge is useful for tasks like this: place a big stroke followed by a smaller one within for a brighter centre.

Shortcuts Flatten Image

Ctrl+Shift+C, Ctrl+V (PC)
Cmd+Shift+C, Cmd+V (Mac)

Useful when you want to flatten your work, but save your old layers, just in case.

PRO SECRETS

Avoid downsizing

I've made this mistake so many times – you want to email a .jpg of your work to someone, so you reduce the size of your image first. Then you forget to undo the change... only realising it much later after you've saved your file again and lost that entry in your Undo stack. Instead, use the resizing options in Photoshop's Save for web tool. It may take a few seconds to load but it's better than risking the alternative.



13 Structural rendering

I spend time refining the shapes and planes of the fortress. At this point, it's okay to dig in and render things out – I'm happy with the big picture, so I won't be wasting my efforts. For some of the more complex shapes, such as the pattern on the banners, I first create the element on a separate layer and then Perspective Transform it into place, using my perspective grids as a guide.



14 Back to the front

I have a bad habit of ignoring the most important parts of a piece. Don't be like me – establish foreground elements early! I refine the shape and perspective of the ships, and decide that the floating beacons of light leading out of the fortress are doing more harm than good. I've chosen the open half-ellipse design for the front of the ships to echo the shape of the fortress entrance and give these things a more cohesive design style.



15 Accents and reflections

Additional touches include engine trails for a brighter, yellow accent colour, and faint reflections in the gas-covered ground plane. Reflections are great for grounding objects and adding believability to a scene. I duplicate the ships and flip them vertically. I then use the Skew Transformation tool to bring the reflections into perspective, and roughly paint the missing parts. I then lightly paint out the layer with a fuzzy eraser until I'm satisfied with the results.

16 Final tweaks

It's tempting to call it a day, but this is more than a quick concept so I take a final critical look while being careful not to overwork things. I correct a few areas of lighting, simplify the shapes of the ground plane and add some selective detail. I noodle on things for too long, but finally call it done. Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions (or critiques!)

Painter



GET TO GRIPS WITH REAL WET OIL

Painter 12 contains a raft of new features. **Simon Dominic** focuses on Real Wet Oil, which takes the simulation of real media to another level

Painter 12, the latest release of Corel's flagship art program, introduces two new Real brush categories: Real Watercolor and Real Wet Oil. Both these brush types are based around a similar set of configuration settings that deal with everything from the familiar options, such as paint quantity and wetness, to more advanced settings that

include drying speed, paint settling and canvas interaction. In addition, diffusion and animation controls add authenticity to the painting process while allowing for the option of swifter stroke execution on slower machines.

To get the best results with Real Wet Oils trying working with a rough canvas surface. Select a Canvas-style paper and roughen it up by increasing the contrast.

Artist PROFILE

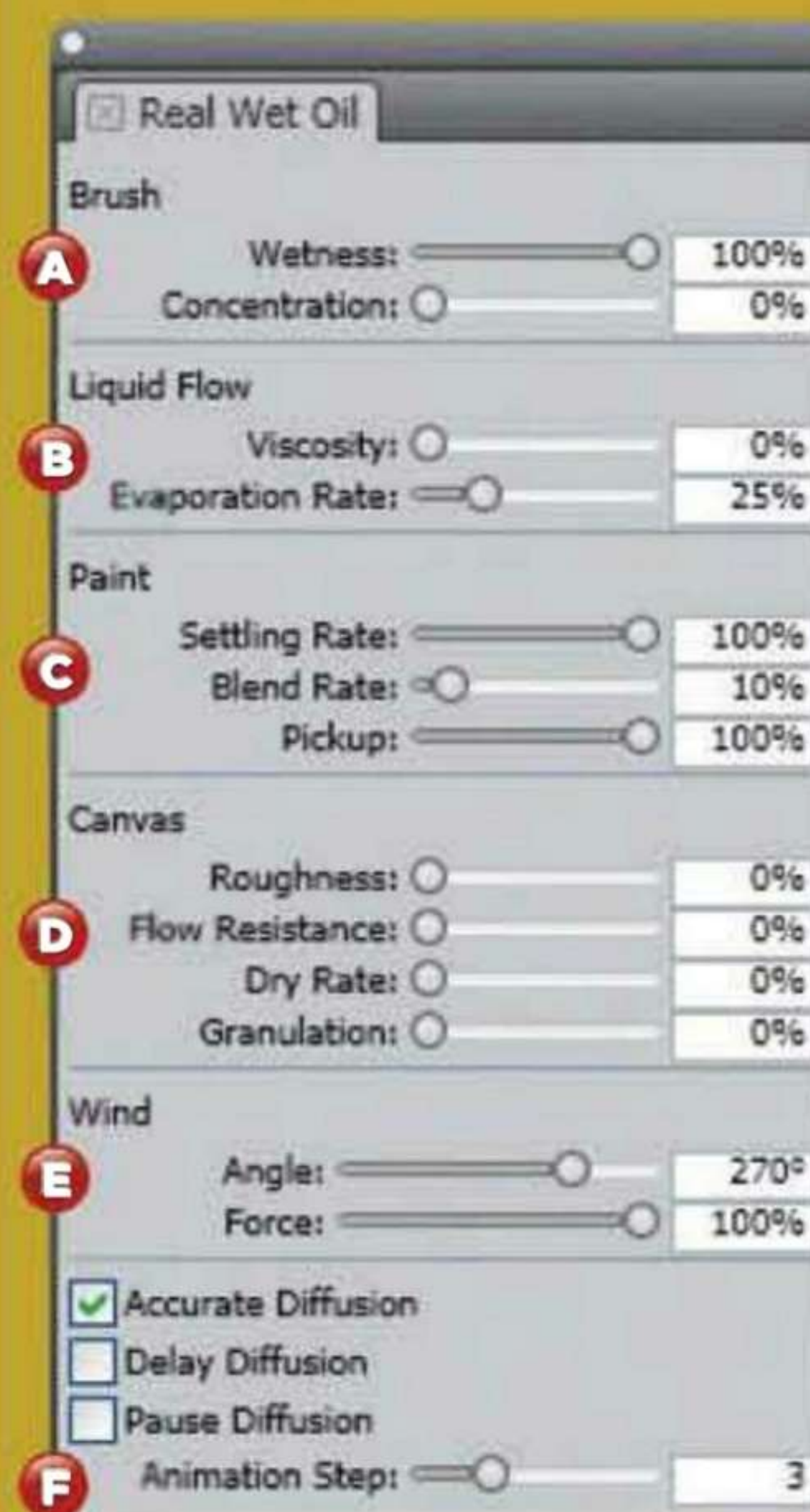
Simon Dominic
COUNTRY: England



Simon is a self-taught professional illustrator who specialises in fantasy, sci-fi and horror. He's worked on game art, book covers, private commissions, cards and magazines.

www.painterly.co.uk

SET YOUR STROKES



A. Brush

Wetness controls the liquidity of the paint. Concentration sets the strength of pigment.

B. Liquid Flow

Increase Viscosity to simulate thicker paint. Decrease Evaporation Rate and the paint remains wet for longer.

C. Paint

Settling Rate works in a similar way to Opacity. Increase Blend Rate for more blending and increase Pickup for more interaction with existing paint.

D. Canvas

Roughness is the coarseness of the canvas and Flow Resistance specifies how much it impedes paint flow. Increase Dry Rate for faster absorption and increase Granulation for the paint to settle more into the canvas.

E. Wind

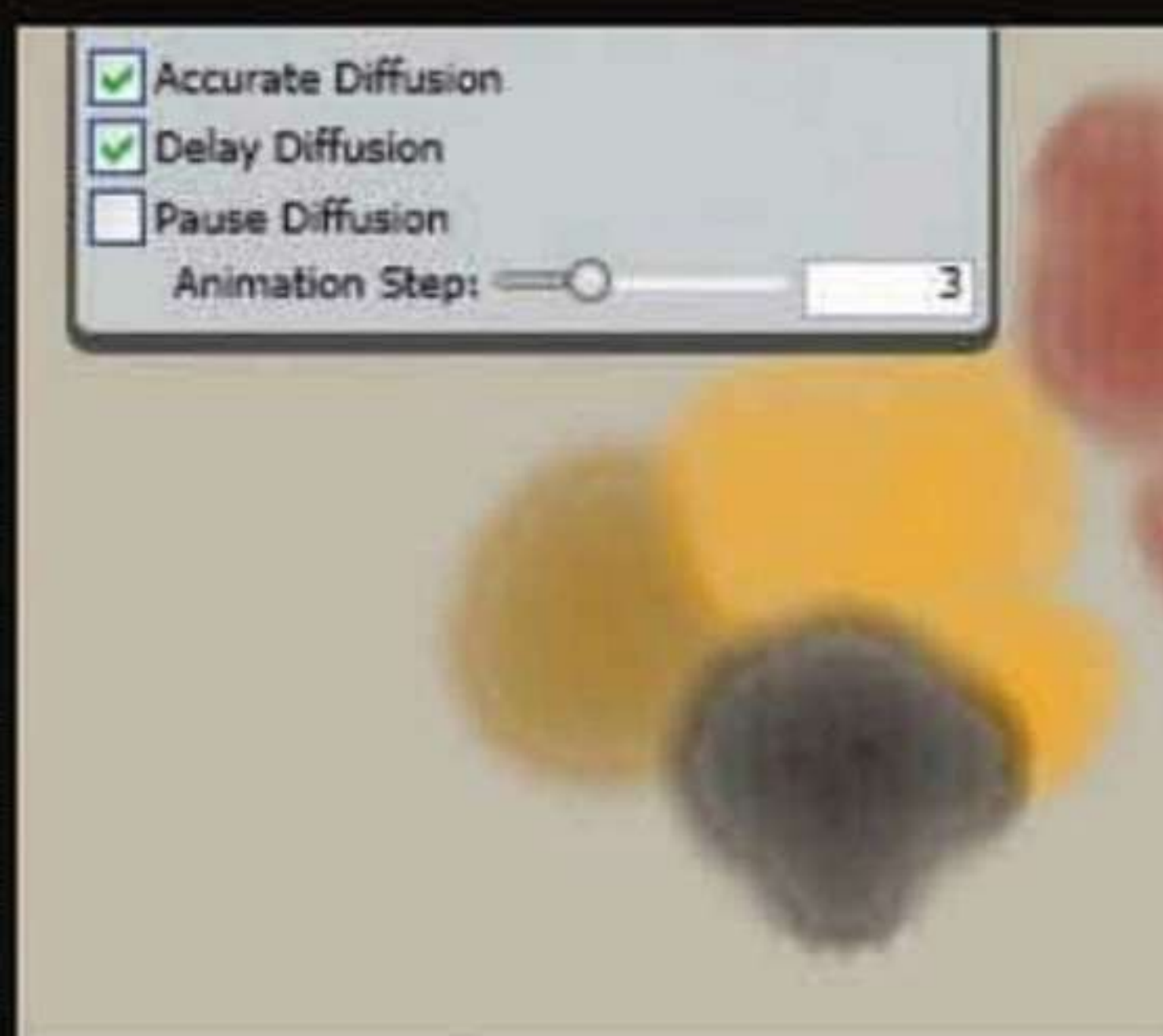
Angle is the direction of flow. Increase Force to maximise the distance the liquid will travel.

F. Diffusion

Uncheck Accurate Diffusion for faster but less-accurate paint behaviour, and uncheck Delay Diffusion to have the paint spread and dry in real time.

1 Diffusion controls

Select Window>Brush Control Panels>Real Wet Oil, then choose the Wet Oil variant from the Real Wet Oil category in the Brush Selector. If you have a powerful computer then at the bottom of the Real Wet Oil palette try unchecking Delay Diffusion and reducing Animation Step to 0. For extra speed, uncheck Accurate Diffusion, check Delay Diffusion and set the Animation Step slider to a higher setting.



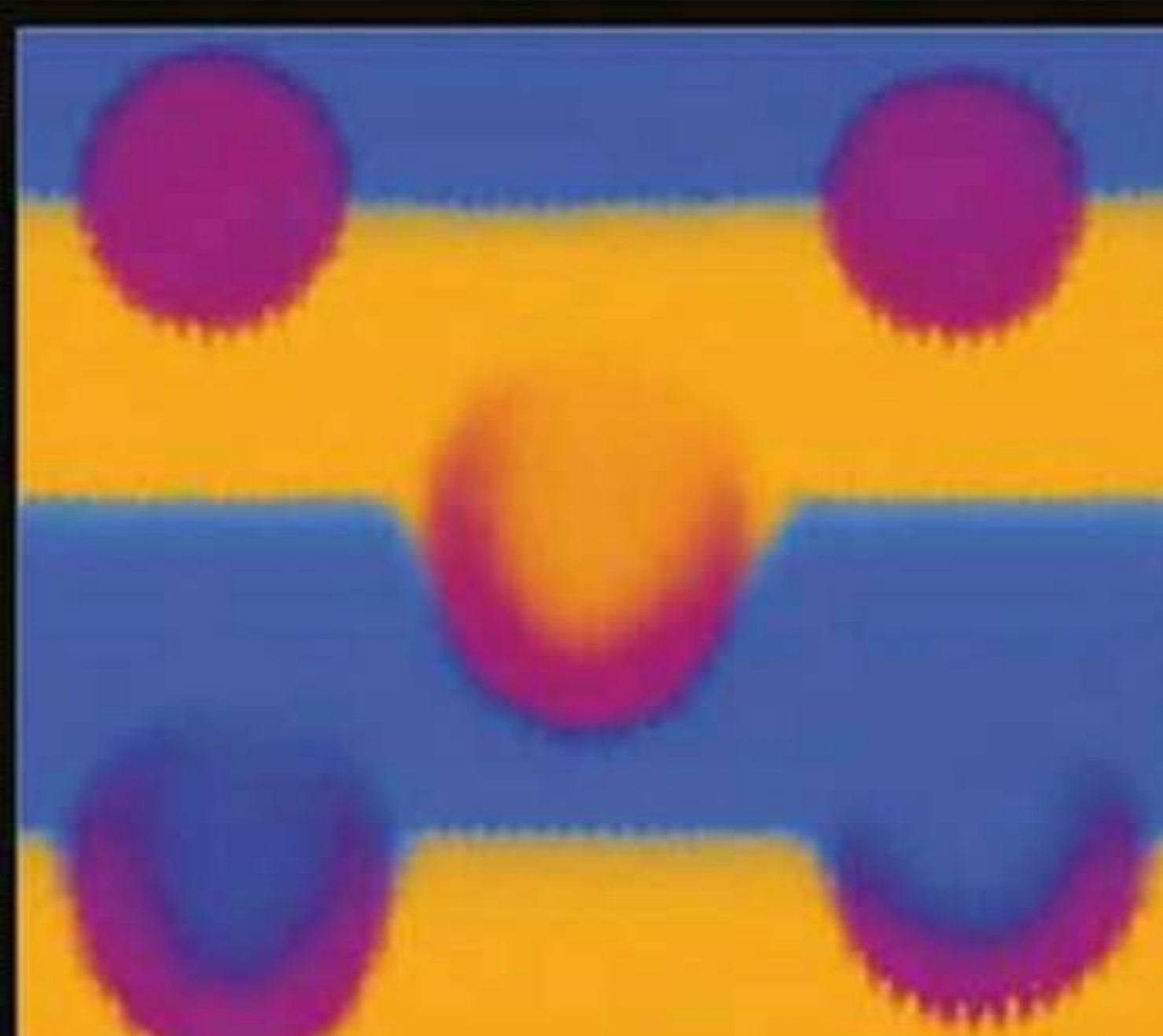
2 Paint with Wet Oils

With the Wet Oil brush, try lowering Wetness and increasing Concentration. This produces thicker strokes that are ideal for detail work. With low Wetness, reduce the Settling Rate to achieve semi-transparent washes and fringes. For added texture, increase the Roughness and Granulation settings. To achieve very soft blends increase Wetness, decrease Flow Concentration & Dry Rate and decrease Opacity.



3 Blend with Thinners

Real Wet Oils can also simulate the addition of pure turps by setting Concentration to 0 per cent and increasing Wetness and Pickup. Choose the Grainy Turps brush and dab it onto existing paint. You can control the direction and extent of the flow of paint with the Wind settings of Angle and Force. To simulate turps running down the canvas set Angle to 270 degrees and Force to 100 per cent.



THE ART DEPARTMENT

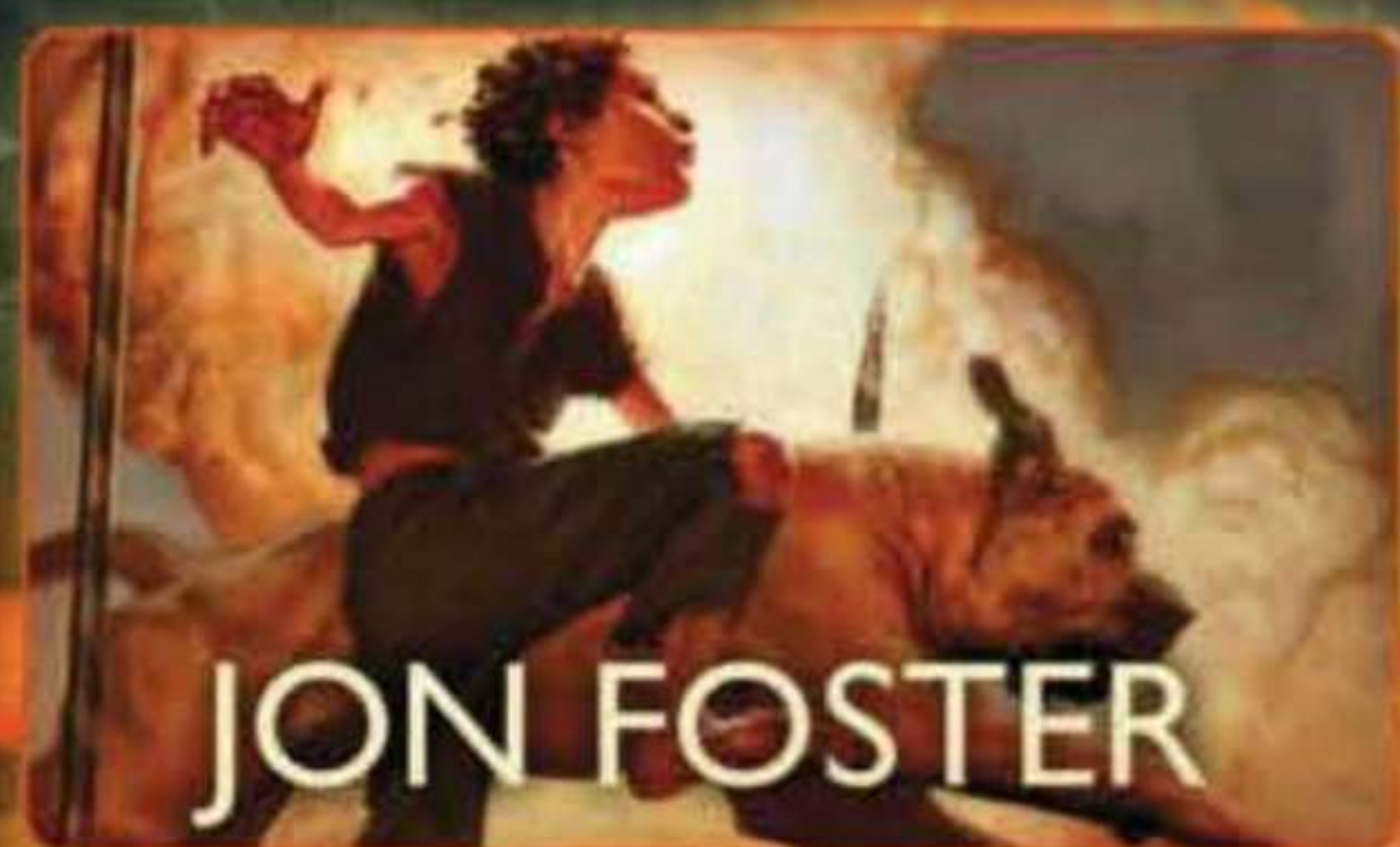
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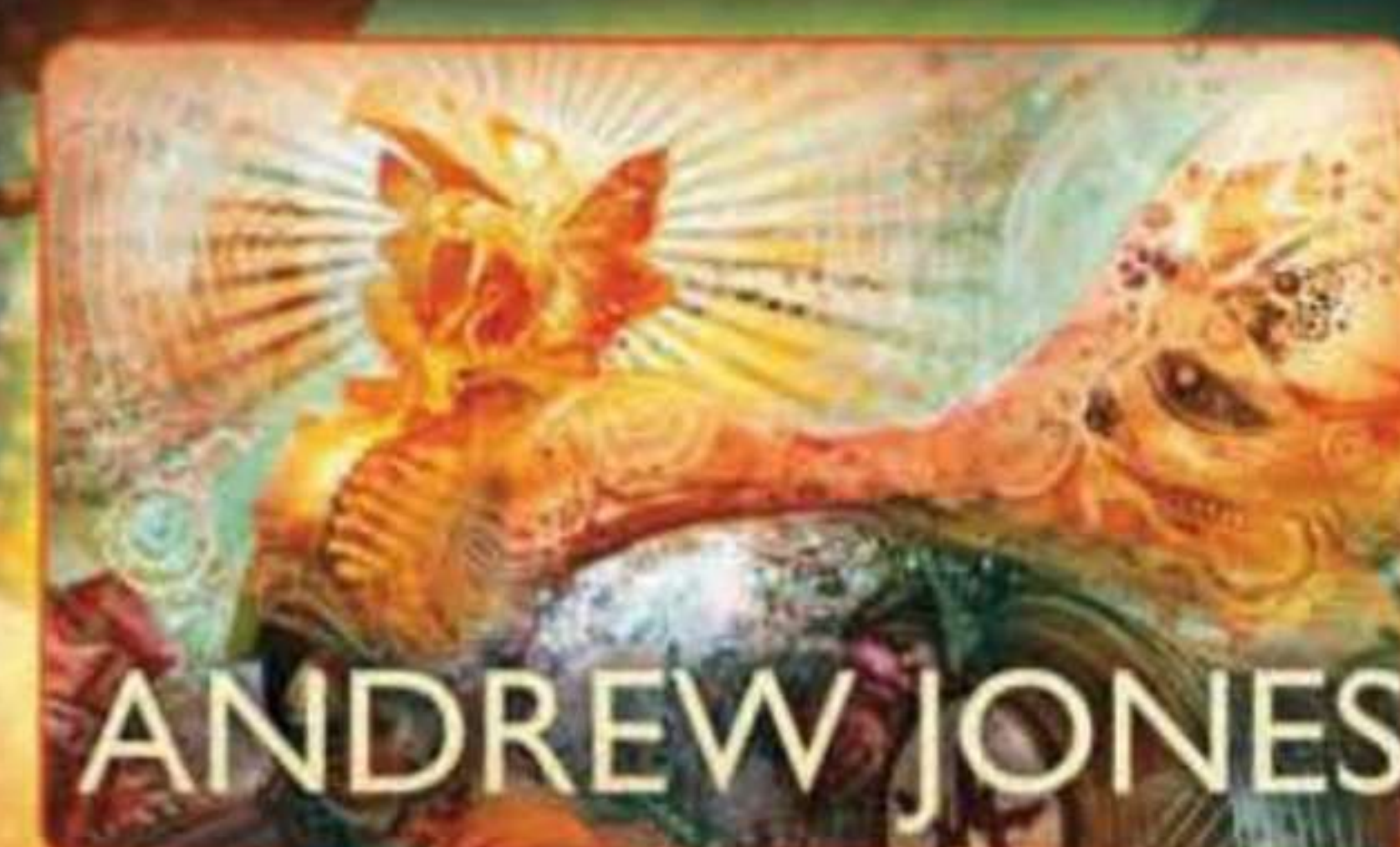
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Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award!

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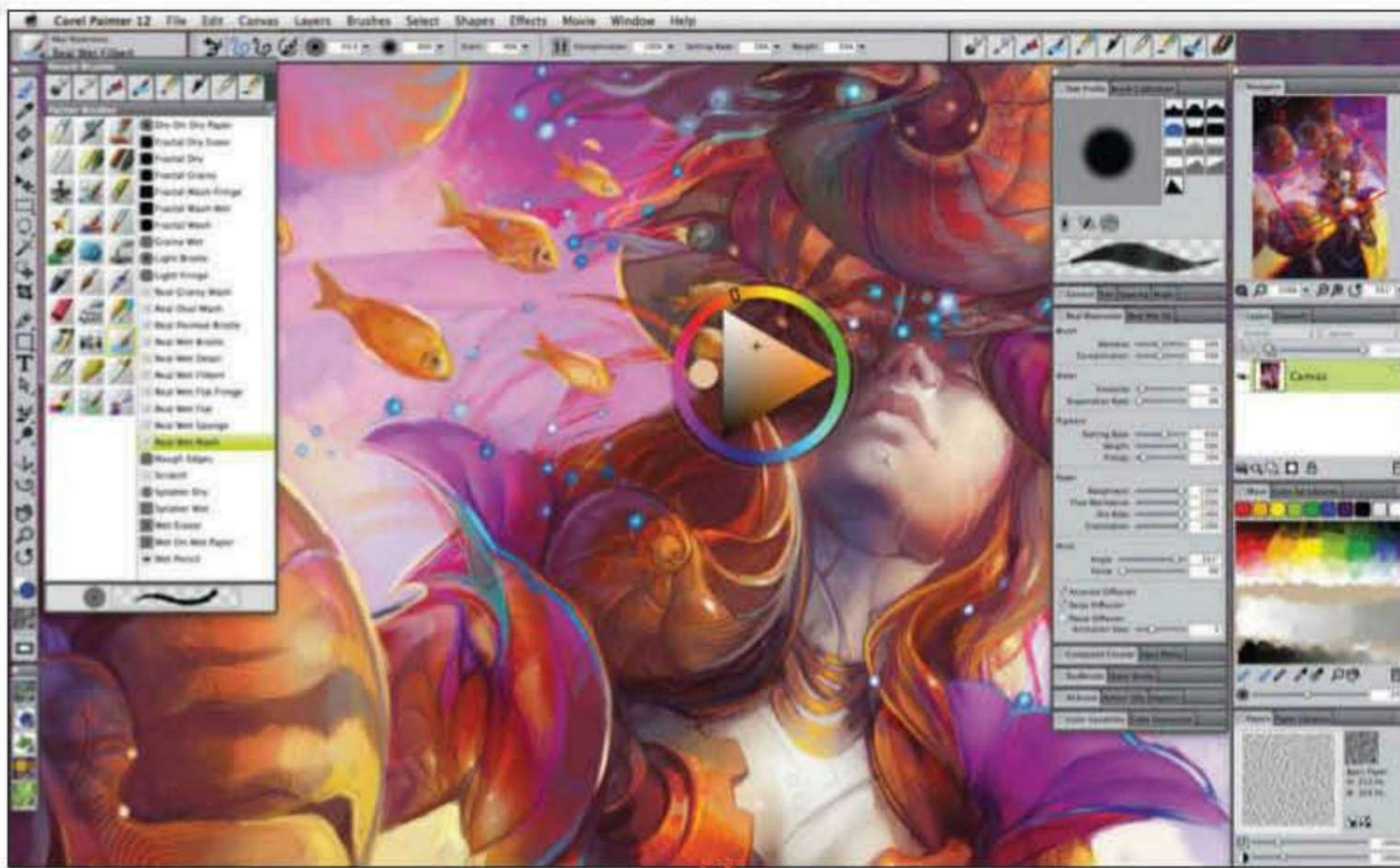


RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Simon Dominic explores Painter 12's new Real Wet Oil brushes to create Alien Gothic, a playful take on the classic painting, American Gothic.

The new Painter 12 includes the handy new Temporal Color palette that can be accessed at the touch of a key and vanishes once a colour is selected.



Painter 12 MAC & PC

PICK AND MIX Corel's flagship digital painting application returns and it looks mighty familiar...

Price £275 (full) £143 (upgrade) **Company** Corel **Web** corel.com **Contact** Via web

Painter 12 isn't a simple update. This is a hefty retooling of the package introducing new brushes, new features, new tools and workflows – even a brand new interface. What's most remarkable is that Corel has managed to implement all of these improvements without confusing long-time users.

There's a very good reason for this: Painter 12's new interface, tools and control options mimic Photoshop's. There's even a Photoshop workspace that apes Adobe's default palette and tools setup. Anyone now working between the two applications will find palettes in similar positions, similar shortcuts and workflows. Just like Photoshop, all palettes are collapsible, editable and saveable, enabling users to either create their perfect workspace or set up different workspaces for different painting jobs, such as a sketching mode, colouring, or even an Andrew Jones mode.

Elsewhere there's a new Temporal Color palette that makes it easy to select a range of colours used in your project and switch between them. In use, it speeds your workflow considerably as it can be accessed with a single keyboard click before selecting a colour, and then hidden away. Along

“It's a delight to watch as the paint pools and dries in front of you”

with a reorganisation of tools and functions, this makes Painter 12 easy (and fun) to use.

On that note, Painter 12's 700-plus brushes have been bolstered by a new Gel brush that enables you to add a tint to an underlying colour, and new Real Watercolour and Real Wet Oil brushes. Both are excellent, and give the most comprehensive and real-life painting experience we've ever tested. Users can blend and bleed watercolours into each other, address paint to flow downwards as if affected by gravity, or seep in to the canvas or paper effect you're working on – smudges, smears and all. It's a delight to watch as paint pools and dries in front of you.

There are less-notable additions, such as the Mirror painting and Kaleidoscope tools that, though great fun, have a limited use.

None of these quibbles really matter, though, as Corel has come up trumps with Painter 12. It steals Photoshop's best bits – yet it adds so much to an already great application ensuring Painter 12 is an essential tool.

DETAILS

Features

- New GUI with collapsible/resizable palettes
- Navigator panel
- Custom workspaces
- 700 brushes
- Kaleidoscope effects
- Real Watercolor paints
- Real Wet Oils paints
- Clone source tool
- Agile brush control
- Gel brushes
- Merge mode

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP/Vista/7, 1GHz processor or higher, 1GB RAM, 600MB hard disk space, 1,280x800 screen resolution
Mac: Mac OS X 10.5/10.6, Intel Core Duo, 1GB RAM, 300MB hard disk space, 1,280x800 screen resolution

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

SIMON DOMINIC

Painter is one of Simon's main tools – he examines the new one

What new tools do you like?

I've found the Navigator palette – which enables quick panning, zooming and rotation of the canvas – is very useful for speeding up my workflow. The same goes for the custom palette functionality, where brushes and menu commands can be attached to unique icons. The ability to set Brush Tracking on a brush-by-brush basis is also a great new feature.

How effective do you think the new paints are?

I find the Real Watercolours to be very convincing with regard to simulating the real media. However, although some interesting effects can be produced using Real Wet Oils, I don't find they produce a particularly life-like effect and I'm sticking with the old Artists' Oils variants for my own work.

What's the learning curve like?

I think it's very similar to version 11, perhaps a little less daunting in version 12 because of the improved GUI and the improved handling of brush Variants and Categories, and some Libraries.

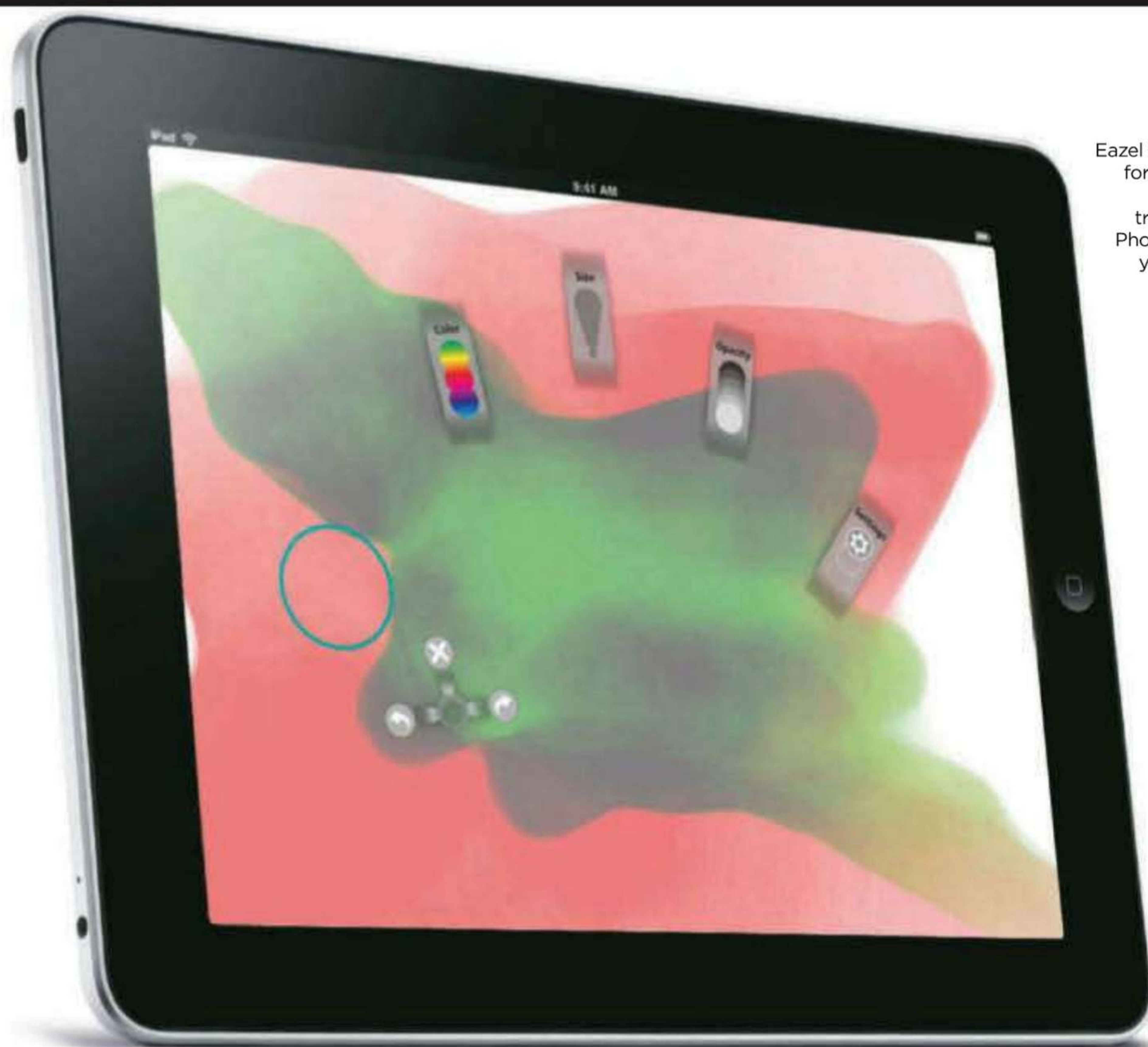
How does Painter 12 aid your art and process?

The great advantage of the new version of Painter is that the authenticity of many of the brush Variants enable you to work as if you were drawing on paper, or painting on canvas. This means that while real-world practice is recommended, it's not actually essential – Painter can be used at all stages of the learning process. The one point I would make is that Painter has a great many functions and options and the temptation is there for the beginner to use them all at once when really they need to put most of their efforts into the fundamentals.



Simon is a freelance fantasy artist who has earned several awards, including the Exposé Master Fantasy award.

painterly.co.uk



Eazel is a great tool for sketching on the go and transmitting to Photoshop when you get home.



iPad

Procreate

TOP TIPS Create your own brushes with this clever painting app

Price £2.99

Company Savage Interactive

Web savageinteractive.com.au

RATING ★★★★★

Eazel for Photoshop iPad

DOUBLE WHAMMY Use intuitive controls to paint on your iPad and then transmit your art directly to Photoshop

Price £3 **Company** Adobe **Web** adobe.co.uk **Contact** 0800 0280 148

Eazel isn't a fully featured digital painting app. We just wanted to get that out of the way. What it is, however, is a means of experimenting with sketching and painting on the go, before transmitting back to Photoshop for further work.

The interface is different to anything we've experienced, being a minimalist canvas with tools that you access by placing all five fingers on the screen. When you do this, you're presented with four tools: Colour, Size, Opacity and Settings (one for each finger) and an Undo/Redo (on your thumb). When you lift your hand off the screen these tool controls go to the centre of the interface. If you lift one finger off before you take your other fingers off the screen, the tool setting underneath that finger doesn't appear in the centre. Complicated to explain, delightfully simple to use.

The tools themselves are easy to control. Hit Colour and a familiar colour wheel appears, along with five quick access colours that you can quickly

change to your preferred colours. The size tool enables you to adjust the brush size by sliding your finger across the screen – a preview of your brush appears top-left. Opacity is similar, with a preview that displays your brush transparency as you slide your finger. Finally, Settings enables you to play a demo of Eazel in action, transmit your work to Photoshop, or save to photos.

Eazel's painting engine is nice, with realistic water blending effects – although on the original iPad it proves a little sluggish. There aren't any brush controls apart from the basic ones we've mentioned, but it doesn't really matter. The fact that you can quickly sketch a drawing on the go and transmit it directly to Photoshop when you get home is worth the £3 alone. And it's so simple to set up. The possibilities this app opens up – with the Photoshop Touch SDK – are enormous. Soon, depending on developer support of course, you'll be able to send your work from any digital painting app directly to Photoshop. And that is cool.

DETAILS

Features

- Digital painting
- Control size and opacity
- Quick-access colours and colour wheel
- Natural water-blending effects
- Unique five-finger gesture-based interface
- Undo and redo
- Send your work directly to Photoshop over wi-fi

System Requirements

iPad or iPad 2, Photoshop CS5 (version 12.0.4 and above), wi-fi connection

Rating

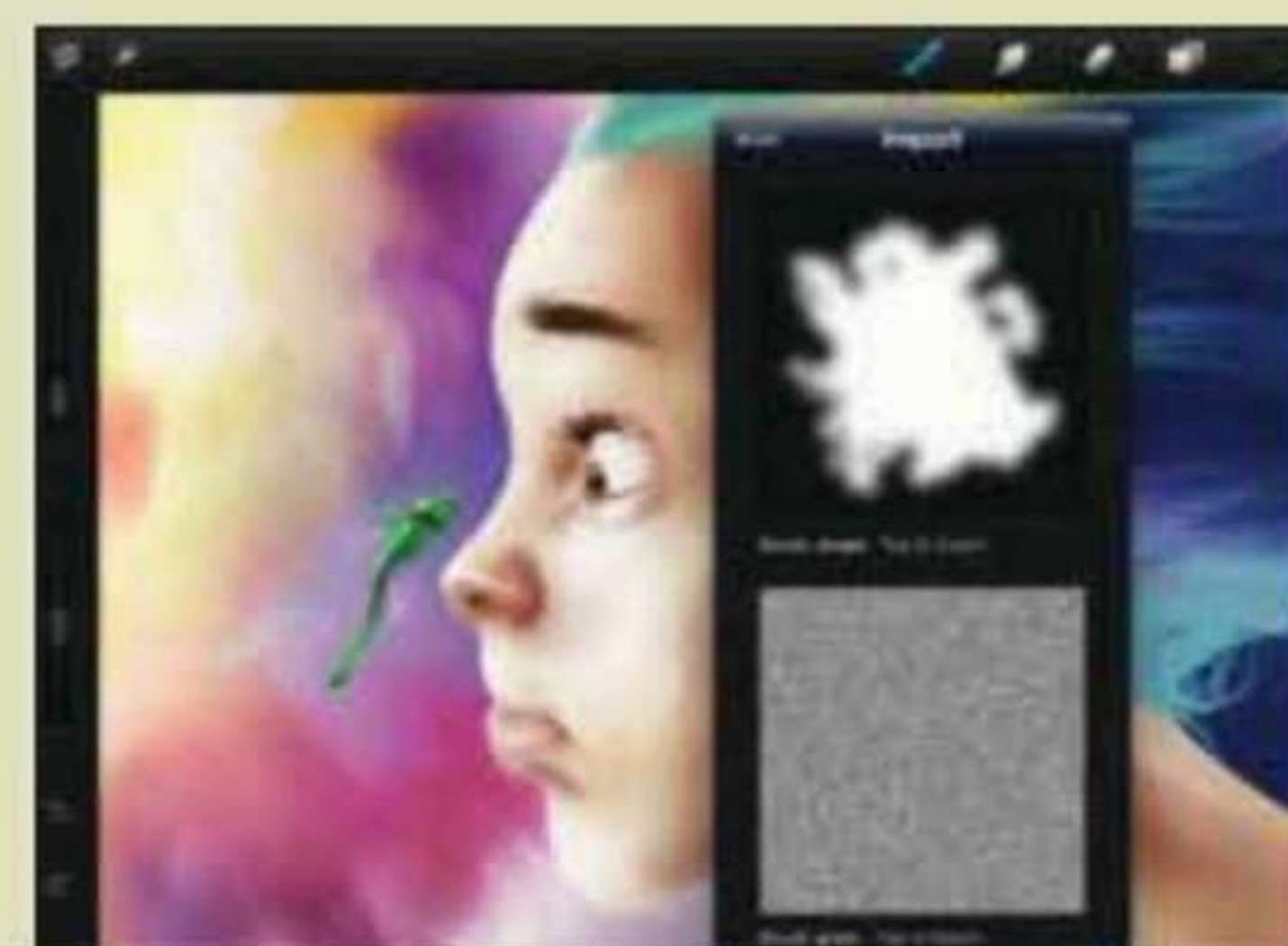
★★★★★

“Not another digital painting app for iPad” we hear you cry. Well yes, but a very interesting one. When you first open Procreate the minimal, slick black-framed interface grabs your attention. This app looks great.

It's a pleasure to use as well. The interface is set out in such a way that it genuinely aids the painting process. The size and opacity sliders down the left-hand side mean you can quickly adjust both properties while painting. It's really smooth.

There's also a superb brush editor. Not only can you tweak shape, grain and so on, you can also import a shape and a grain file from your iPad's photo album. Just like Photoshop, you have full control over brush shapes and textures. It means you can create a brush shape and grain effect in Procreate, save it out and then reimport it as a brush.

Procreate is refreshing, easy to use and a great tool for seasoned and beginner artists alike.



The ability to import a brush shape and grain texture is a feature unique to Procreate.



iPad

Nav for Photoshop

REMOTE CONTROL Run Photoshop from the comfort of your iPad

Price £1.19

Company Adobe

Web adobe.co.uk

RATING

Controlling Photoshop wirelessly via your iPad is the order of the day with Nav for Photoshop. And that's essentially it – there are no extra features to speak of as such.

It's simple to set up. Just hit the PS icon in the app and specify your connection to Photoshop. After this, you can use the large icons to select your tools in Photoshop. You can also swap foreground and background colours, cycle through screen modes and zoom to actual pixels. If you want to edit the 16 tools you can access, it's a cinch – simply hit the Edit button and drag new ones in.

Why would you need this though? Well, it provides a quick way to access your favourite tools – and your iPad can be used almost like a quick access shortcut screen. You can also browse through all of your open documents, which is a nice touch. Sure, it's a bit gimmicky, but it can definitely speed up your workflow and is a lot of fun to use.



Choose which tools appear in the block of 16 by hitting Edit and dragging the icons across.

Color Lava for Photoshop

iPad

MIX IT UP Create custom colours and themes to use in Photoshop with this novel iPad app

Price £1.79 **Company** Adobe **Web** adobe.co.uk **Contact** 0800 0280 148

Color Lava for Photoshop is another app that takes advantage of the recently released Photoshop Touch SDK – with this iPad app enabling you to create custom colour palettes and schemes for use within Photoshop.

The app itself is simple to use: choose a colour from the defined six (double-tap them to edit these) and then begin painting, blending together colours. If you want to clean your brush, just hit the 'water' above the colours – which includes a rather hypnotic rippling effect when you touch it.

Paint blends together nicely, providing the ability to swirl and daub colours together. To select your colours for your colour theme, simply tap on the empty squares on the right-hand side of the interface and then on the colour on the canvas. Tapping the grid at the bottom of the interface

shows your current themes (they're saved automatically) and you can also edit the names of them here. Double-tapping a theme enables you to email it along with an RGB breakdown of all the colours or, once you've set up your connection to Photoshop, send the swatches within your theme directly to the Swatches panel. They appear at the end of your current swatches and you can then save these swatches for use in Photoshop another time. You can also, by tapping a swatch within a theme, make it the foreground colour in Photoshop.

Lava is great for experimenting with colour. It works seamlessly with Photoshop and offers a more natural way of mixing colours. Wonderful for £1.79 and a gem for any digital artist using Photoshop – it's a brilliant app and genuinely useful.

Use Color Lava to create colour themes and send the swatches over to Photoshop in an instant.

DETAILS

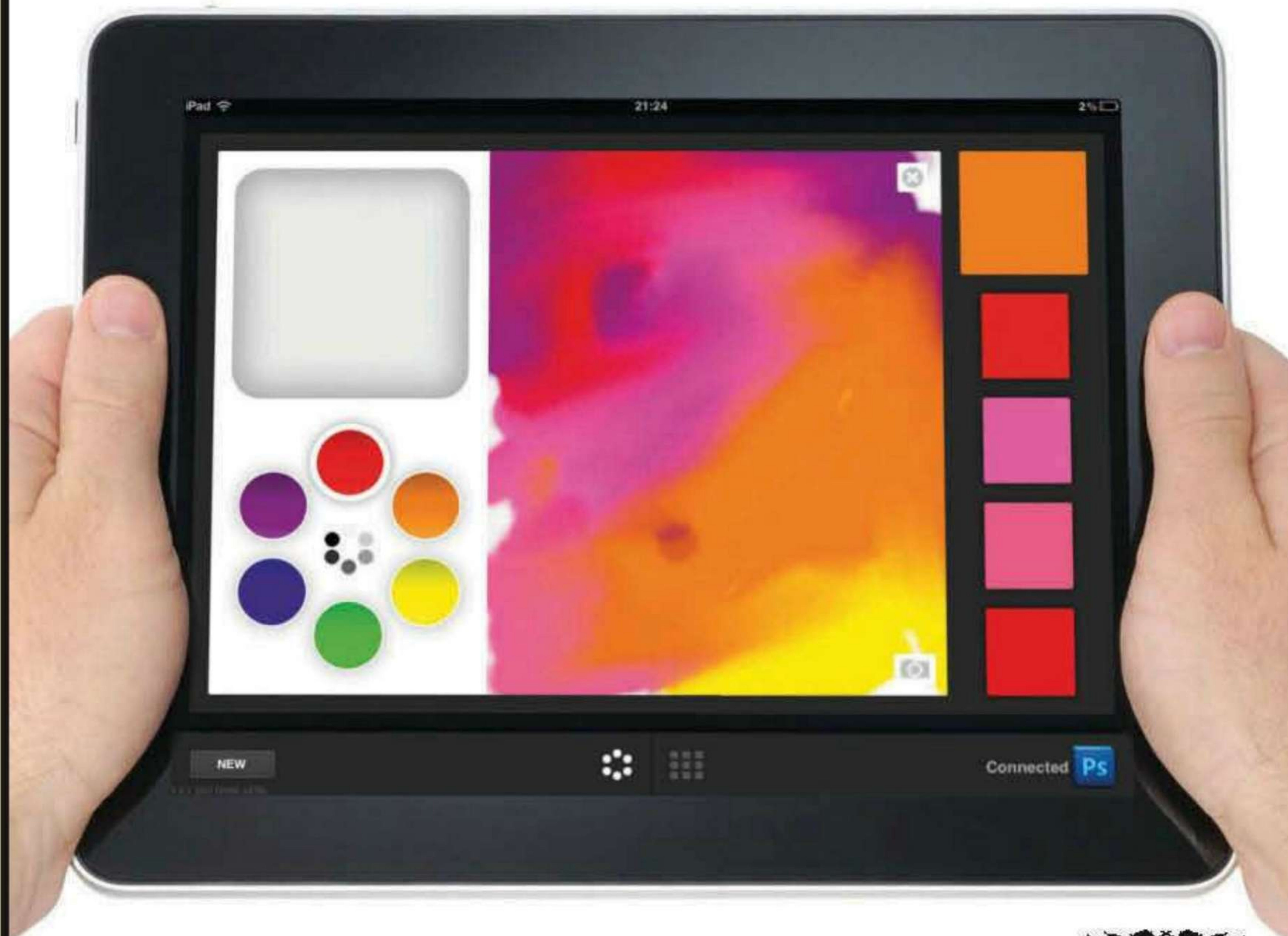
Features

- Create custom colour themes
- Use water to clean brush
- Mix paint and select colours
- Email colour themes with RGB breakdowns
- Send colour themes to Photoshop as swatches
- Make adjustments using HSB sliders
- Tap a swatch to make foreground colour in Photoshop
- Create themes remotely and import to Photoshop later

System Requirements

iPad or iPad 2, Photoshop CS5 (version 12.0.4 and above), wi-fi connection

Rating





The Art of Atomhawk Design Volume 1

GAMES MASTERS A well-presented book by talented 2D and 3D artists from a young digital art company

Author Atomhawk Design **Publisher** 3D Total **Price** £30
Web 3dtotal.com **Available** Now

When Midway Games went bankrupt in 2009, it left digital artists Cumron Ashtiani, Peter Thompson, Corlen Kruger and Steven Pick out of a job. Luckily, their talents didn't go to waste. Just two weeks later they formed a digital art production company, Atomhawk Design, and have since worked with some of the biggest names in the games industry.

The studio's first venture into the book market, The Art of Atomhawk Design Volume 1 is a combination of their best and most successful projects, together with some personal artwork. Anyone interested in the art of video games need look no further than this 192-page book that features everything from rough sketches to full renders, with a few added tips on best practice along the way.

The book is well-organised and its layout simple. There are four chapters – characters, action, environments and vehicles – each of which contains a range of images with different art styles.

The authors have mainly let the images do the talking, with the accompanying text short and sweet in many cases. However, they've managed to find just the right balance by expanding the word count on more detailed illustrations. There's also a nice short opening paragraph at the

beginning of each chapter describing what the artists believe are important aspects to consider when dealing with each subject.

With few words the pace of the book soon becomes apparent, as the initial chapter moves swiftly from static characters – including some fantastic Hammer Horror-style pin-ups – to full-blown action scenes. This is followed by a somewhat lengthy section on environments with some stunning

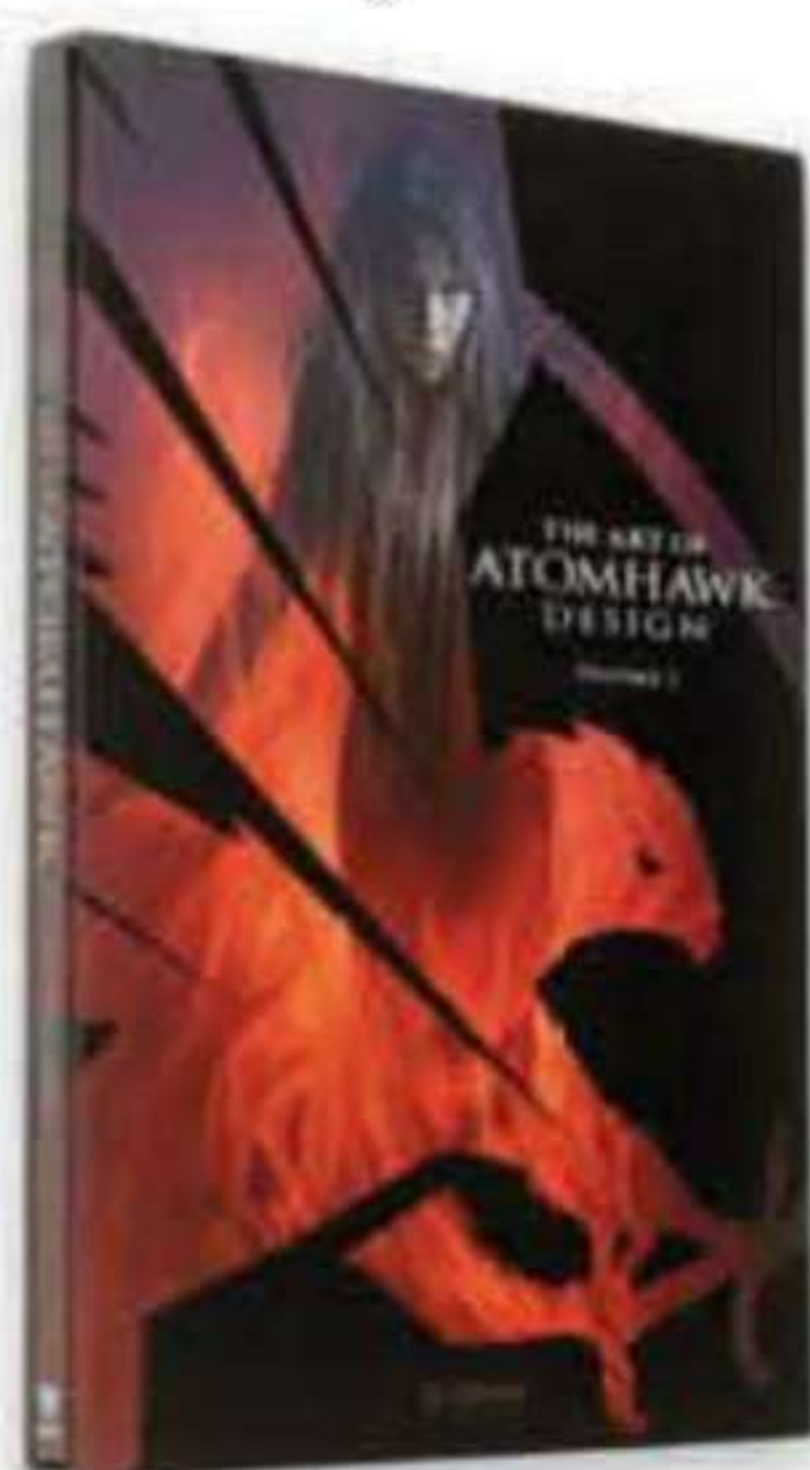
post-apocalyptic, futuristic and contemporary scenes. The latter collection is beautiful but the least interesting and unfortunately commands more pages than the others. However, the last chapter ends the book on a high with a wonderful opening airship image in a varied vehicle section.

A lot of thought has clearly gone into the design

of Atomhawk's Volume 1 – even down to its neat slip-cover presentation – although this could easily have been spared to shave a few pounds off the retail price.

Overall, this is a very well-composed book with a lot of fantastic content which, if the studio continues to produce such high-quality work, could well be the start of a very impressive series.

RATING



Further reading...

A classic comeback and a random collection from more than 70 artists

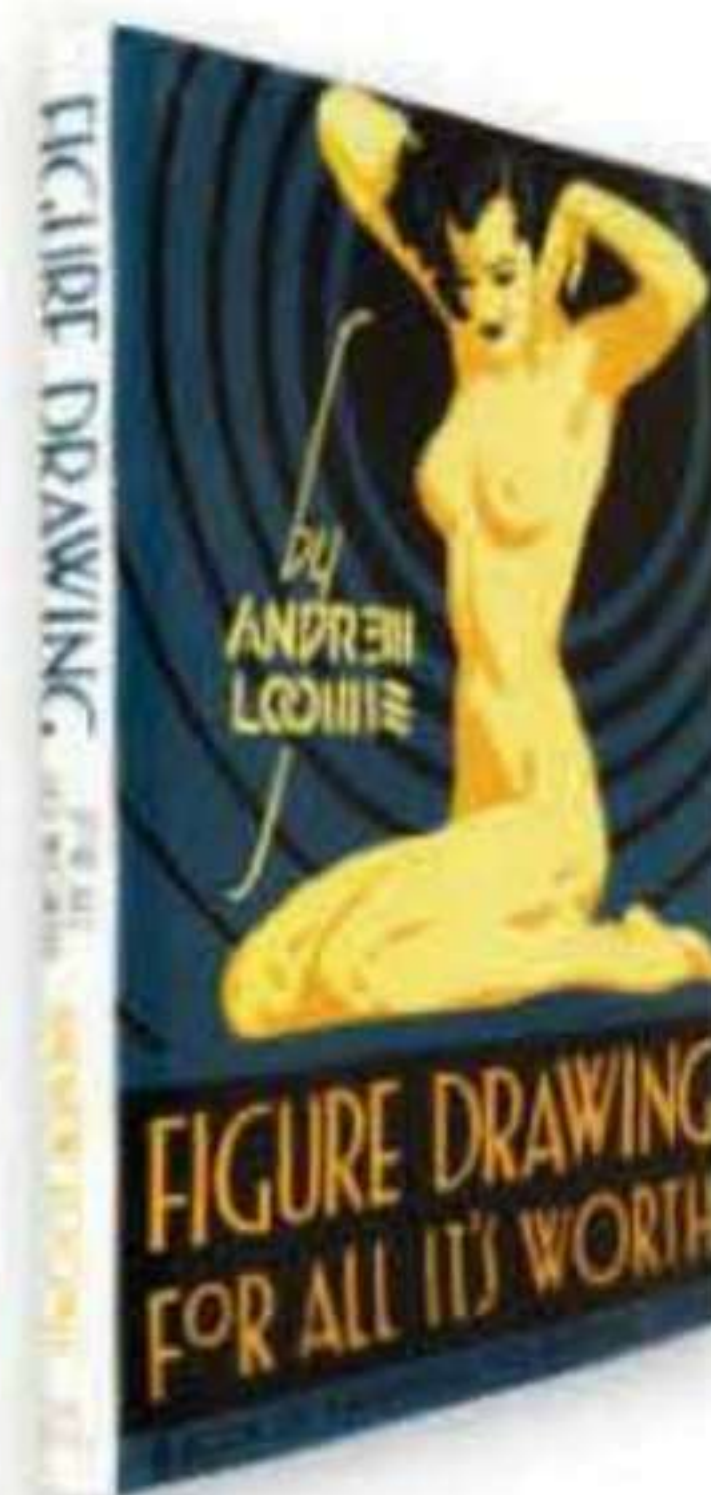
Figure Drawing For All It's Worth

Author Andrew Loomis

Publisher Titan Books **Price** £30

Available Now

RATING



For the first time in several decades, artists are able to get their hands on the book that the American Academy of Art once proclaimed as "one of the most brilliant contributions that figure drawing has ever received".

First printed in 1943, this book is without a doubt a must-have in any artist's collection, no matter what field you work in. Even though the book explains the art of hand-drawing figures, the techniques held in these pages will inspire any artist and help them to hone and perfect skills that can be translated to any medium.

This is a long-lost treasure that has at last been rediscovered, and the world of digital art is a much better place for it.

Gorilla Artbook Vol.1

Author Gorilla Artfare

Publisher CFS Ink **Price** €30

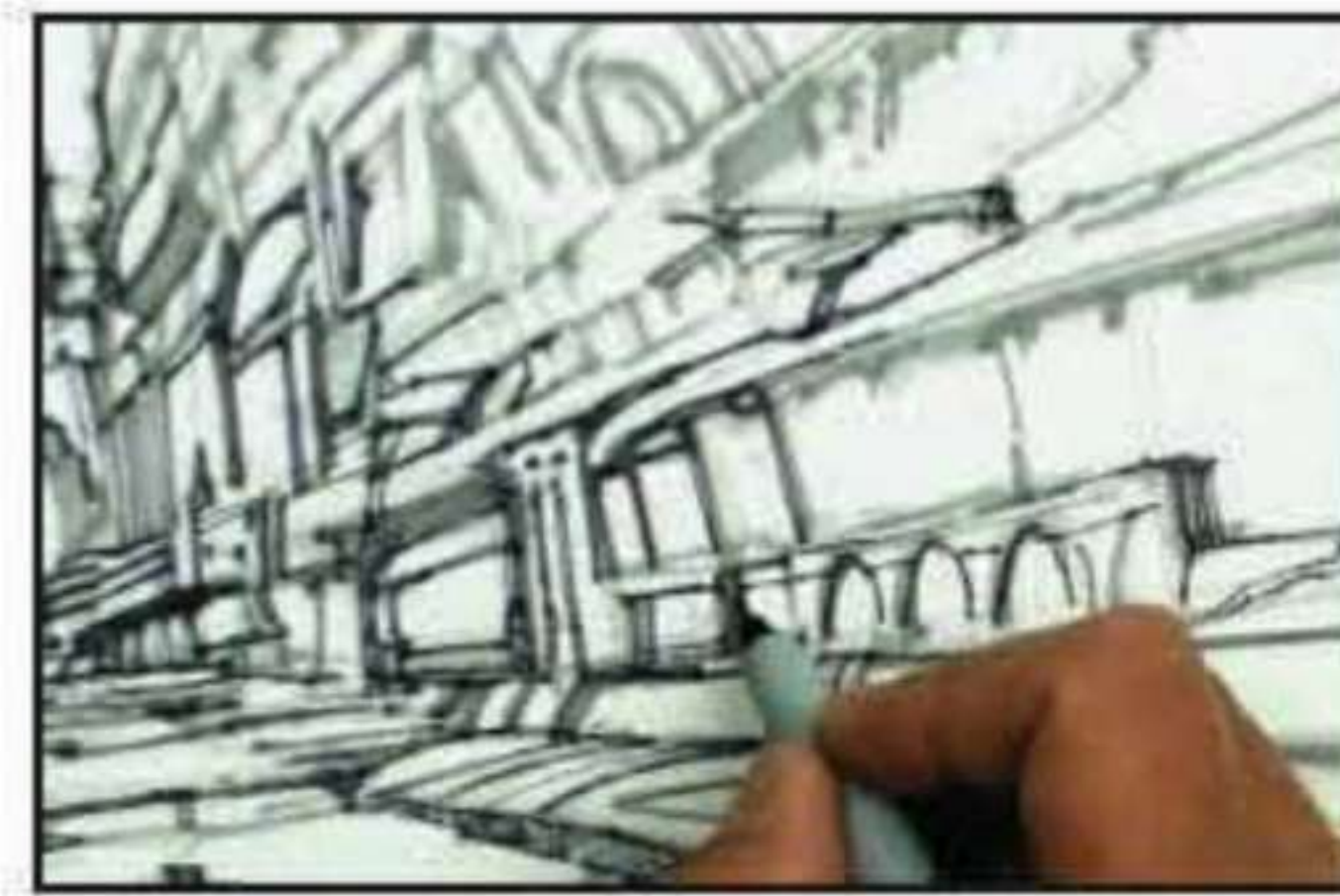
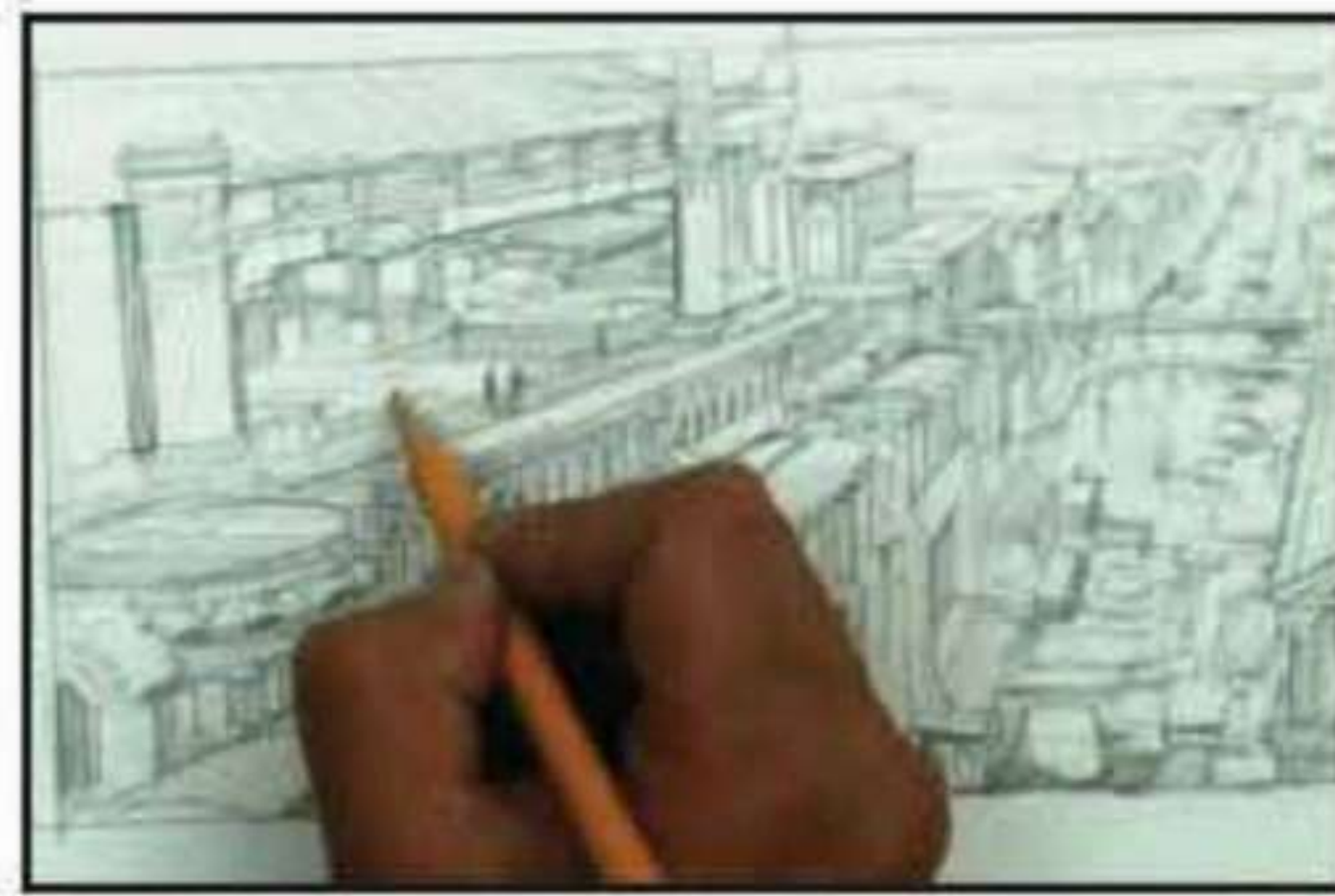
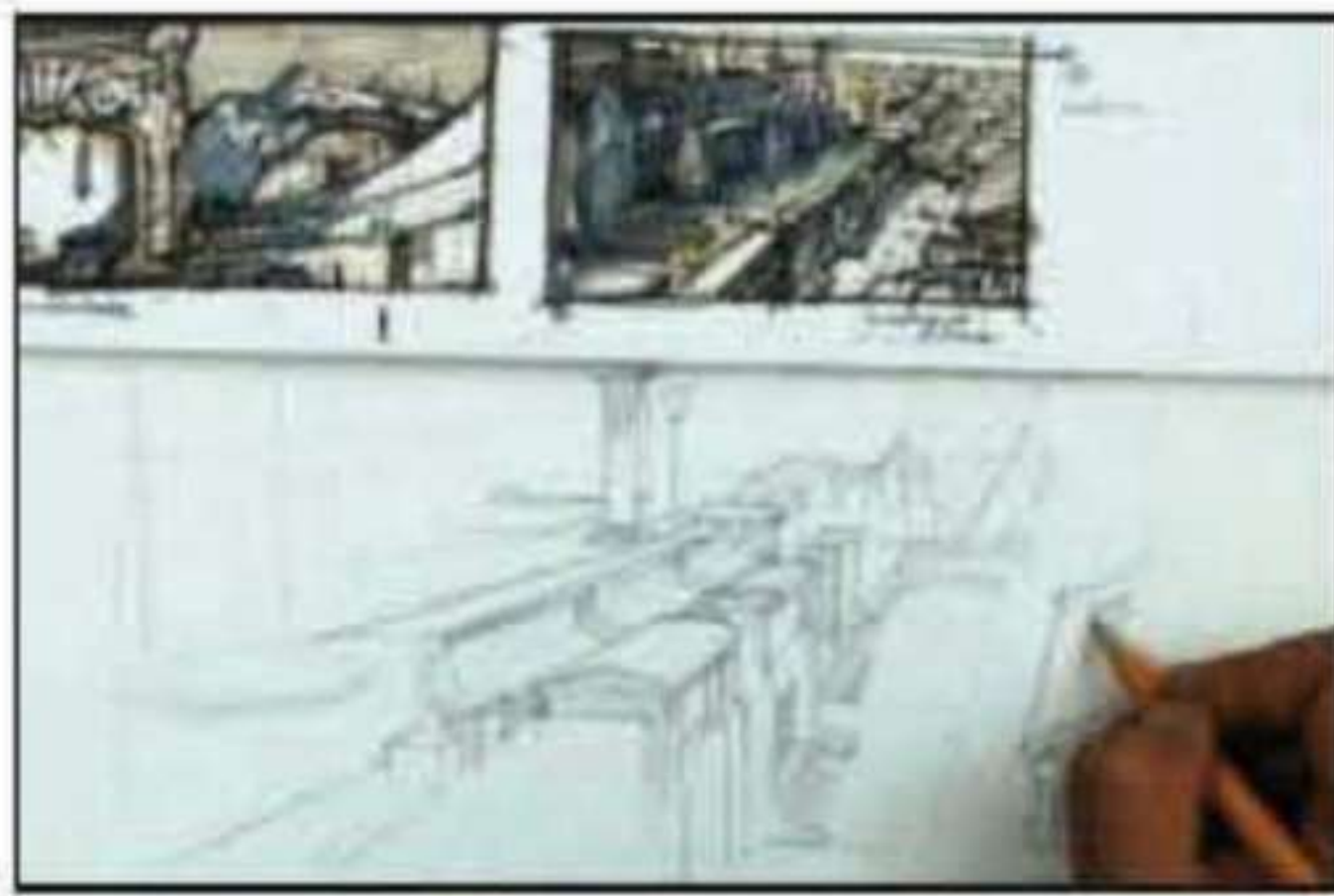
Available Now

RATING

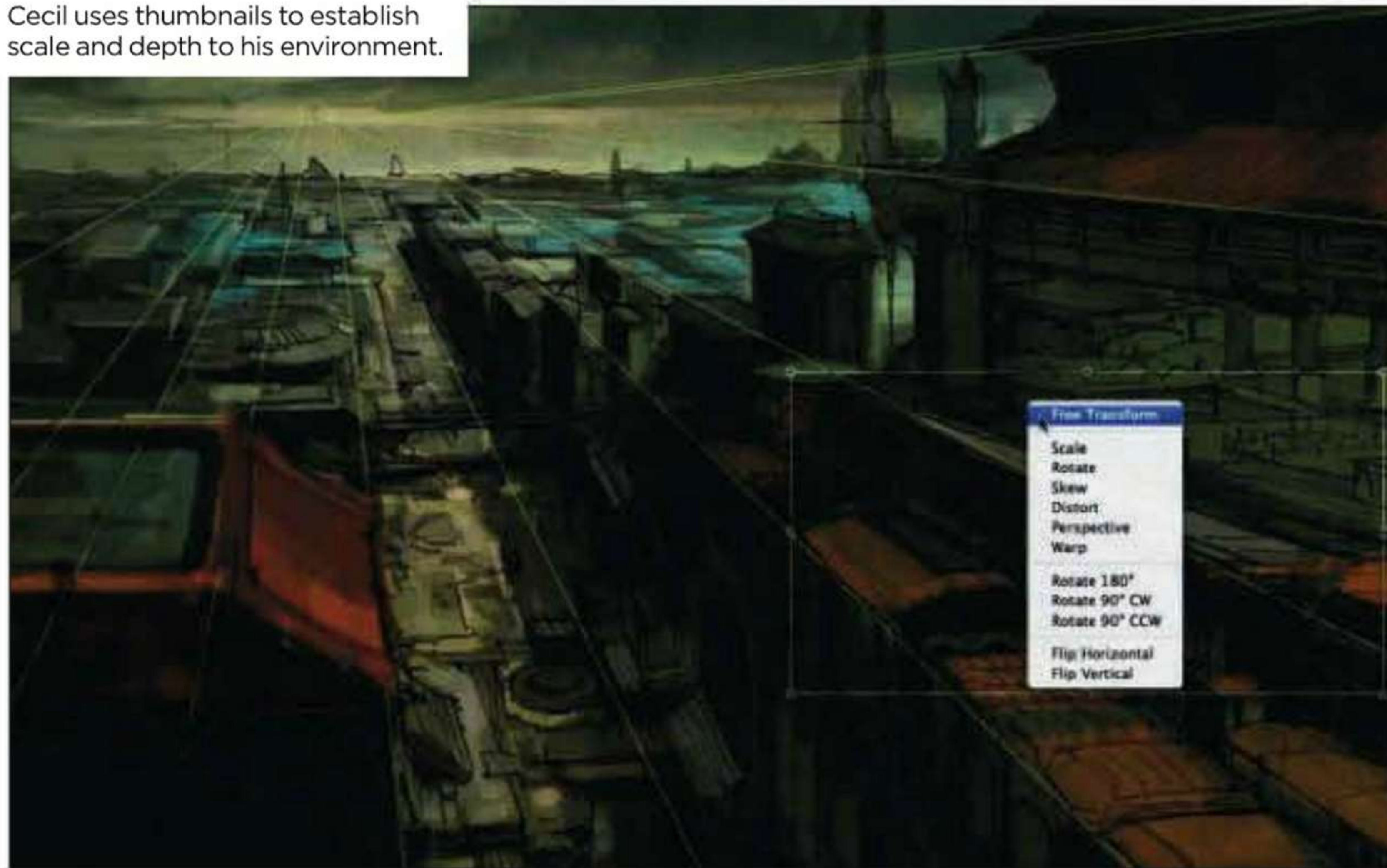


If you're a regular visitor to illustrator galleries then Gorilla Artbook Vol. 1 will very likely tickle your fancy. The new book collects both traditional and digital illustrations from more than 70 international artists in 18 different countries and puts them in one place. And it works.

The chapters are organised in genres, and the 250-plus pages offer completely different and fascinating interpretations and styles of each topic. The sheer number of artists among the pages here ensures there's something new with each turn of the page. So no matter what field of art you're interested in, we're confident that this book will definitely have something in it that gets you excited and inspired.



Cecil uses thumbnails to establish scale and depth to his environment.



While each DVD works as a standalone product, you'd be better off investing in both to see how Cecil's work pays off.



Environment Art Direction for Games Volumes 1 & 2



NUTS AND BOLTS Concept art giant Cecil Kim reveals how individual artists can work together on a combined vision

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$59 each **Format** DVD/Download **Web** thegnomonworkshop.com

Designing buildings for video games might sound like an almost perversely narrow topic for a four-hour training video, but Cecil Kim's masterclass is relevant to any artist who cares about the worlds their characters inhabit, or who has an eye on working in the games industry. Although each of this session's two volumes can be bought separately, investing in both enables you to see how the decisions Cecil makes early on pay off later as he goes from sketch to finished concept piece.

Volume 1 focuses on generating and realising ideas, as Cecil explores different types of building in sketch form. Working in either marker pen or pencil – and explaining how the choice affects the result – he uses this stage to establish form and depth.

Cecil's quiet, sometimes hesitant delivery means important points can go unnoticed on a first viewing: you need to pay close attention to get the

most out of either video. Inexperienced artists may feel frustrated at the amount of knowledge Cecil assumes in his narration. Rather than explaining the principles behind values, for example, his concern is more with exploring how values help him achieve his goal of defining each building.

What emerges here and in the second volume, in which Cecil develops scans of several sketches into colour concept pieces in more fully realised locations, is an artistic approach that's as much about defining information as it is about creativity. Cecil continually relates his artwork to the needs of his colleagues – for example, 3D artists who'll take a concept piece and make an in-game level out from it. It's a thoughtful marriage of creativity and pragmatism that'll benefit anyone working on a collaborative project, revealing how a single artist can help create a strong, collective vision.

DETAILS

Volume 1: Chapters

- Sketching ideas
- Shape and scale
- Marker shading and line drawing
- Cityscape layout

Volume 2: Chapters

- Lighting direction
- Editing while painting
- Atmosphere perspective
- Working experience

Length

Volume 1: 111 minutes
Volume 2: 140 minutes

RATING

ARTIST PROFILE

CECIL KIM

Cecil's been working as a concept artist and illustrator in the entertainment industry for the past 15 years. Originally from Seoul, he moved to the US to pursue an art career, and studied illustration and fine arts at the Art Center College of Design. Cecil began his career in the games industry as a storyboard artist for SquareUSA. He designed memorable locations in Final Fantasy IX and later joined



cecilkim.com

Sony's Santa Monica studio, where he was visual development lead on the God of War series.



Black Hawk Down meets Independence Day. But a bit better than that sounds.

Battle: Los Angeles

SUMMER INVASION Yet another Hollywood apocalypse flick – at least the alien art's good

Distributor Sony **Cert** 12 **Price** £20 DVD (£25 Blu-ray) **Available** 11 July

Aliens come in all shapes and sizes, mostly because Hollywood money men need to find new ways to retell War of the Worlds. Every summer. From May until August, when most of us are planning a stint laying in the sun, Hollywood conjures up new ways to destroy the world.

The latest is Battle: Los Angeles, in which, and not to give too much away here, Los Angeles is invaded by aliens. The pretence is as unsubtle as the name. It's Black Hawk Down riding on Independence Day's coattails, with Aaron Eckhart and Michelle Rodriguez defending Hollywood from yet another alien menace.

In this respect, at least, Battle: Los Angeles achieves a gold star as Paul Gerrard's alien designs offer a unique mix of familiarity and otherworldly eccentricity. A homage to the classic Grey alien, Paul's designs merge traditional alien features with a biomechanical mess. The final air of familiarity is to give these invaders

human characteristics – they pull their wounded to cover and take orders from squad leaders. These are no sexual metaphors prowling air vents and they don't kill on instinct or for sport. It's a military invasion of Los Angeles from beyond the stars that can get dragged down in places by its worthy tone, but is still a cut above over such invasion flicks.

Watching the Blu-ray's extras, such as Aliens in LA and the Command Control option that enables you to compare storyboards to final sequences via the picture-in-picture option, helps to discover why. The VFX team went to great pains to ensure their alien

invasion felt real, by creating life-size, eight-foot tall aliens for the actors to stab, pull apart and generally mess up.

With so much comment in the extras on the uniqueness of the alien designs that often carry the film, it's a shame Paul Gerrard wasn't given enough credit in the extras. Then again, there's always next summer's invasion...

RATING



Also look at...

Nicolas Cage in a bad film and Nicolas Cage in... another bad film



Season of the Witch

Distributor Momentum

Certificate 15

Price £11 DVD (£13 Blu-ray)

Available Now

RATING



Fourteenth century superstition gets 21st century CG treatment, but with Nicolas Cage phoning in his lines it's alarming for all the wrong reasons. The story is fun enough. After years of

slaying infidels, medieval knights Cage and Ron 'Hellboy' Perlman become disillusioned with their church's crusading bloodlust. Facing jail time for desertion, they strike a deal to transport a suspected witch to a distant monastery to stand trial.

Sandwiched between the cheap and cheerful CG wig-outs of the opening battles and the final monastery showdown, the characters' journey is slow and predictable. (Ancient wooden bridge? Really?) Perlman tries his best to convey camaraderie with a thoroughly bored-looking Cage, but it's Robert 'Misfits' Sheehan and witchy Claire Foy who come closest to bringing the film out of its self-inflicted coma.



Drive Angry

Distributor Lionsgates

Certificate 18

Price £18 DVD (£25 Blu-ray)

Available 4 July

RATING



Having helped perfect the Dumb Fun Movie with Con Air and The Rock, Nicolas Cage has frequently aimed for similar sub-mental brilliance (Gone in 60 Seconds is approaching

genius... when seen from the right angle), but never quite attained their level of glorious idiocy.

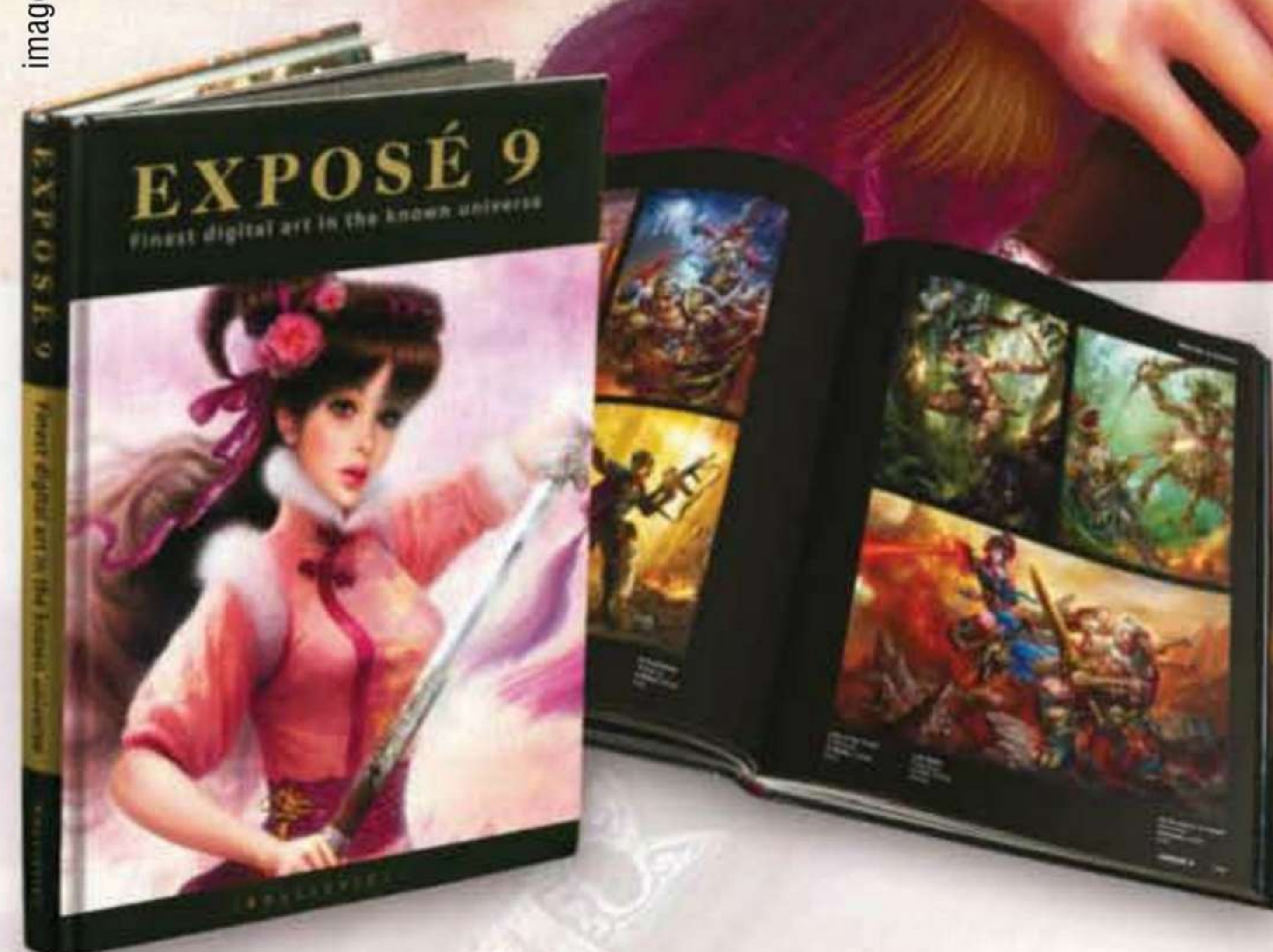
Drive Angry is a speed limit-flouting journey through Planet Stupid. Cage busts out of hell to kill Satanists planning to sacrifice his granddaughter. Satan's errand boy Death is also above ground with orders to bring him back, and Amber Heard plays Cage's beautiful, feisty and utterly unconvincing companion.

The teen boy fantasy script may offend some, but what's really annoying is that despite the ingredients for idiotic excellence, it's put together with the craftsmanship of a demolition derby racer. No one told director Patrick Lussier that you need to be smart to pull off dumb.

image courtesy of Ruoxing Zhang

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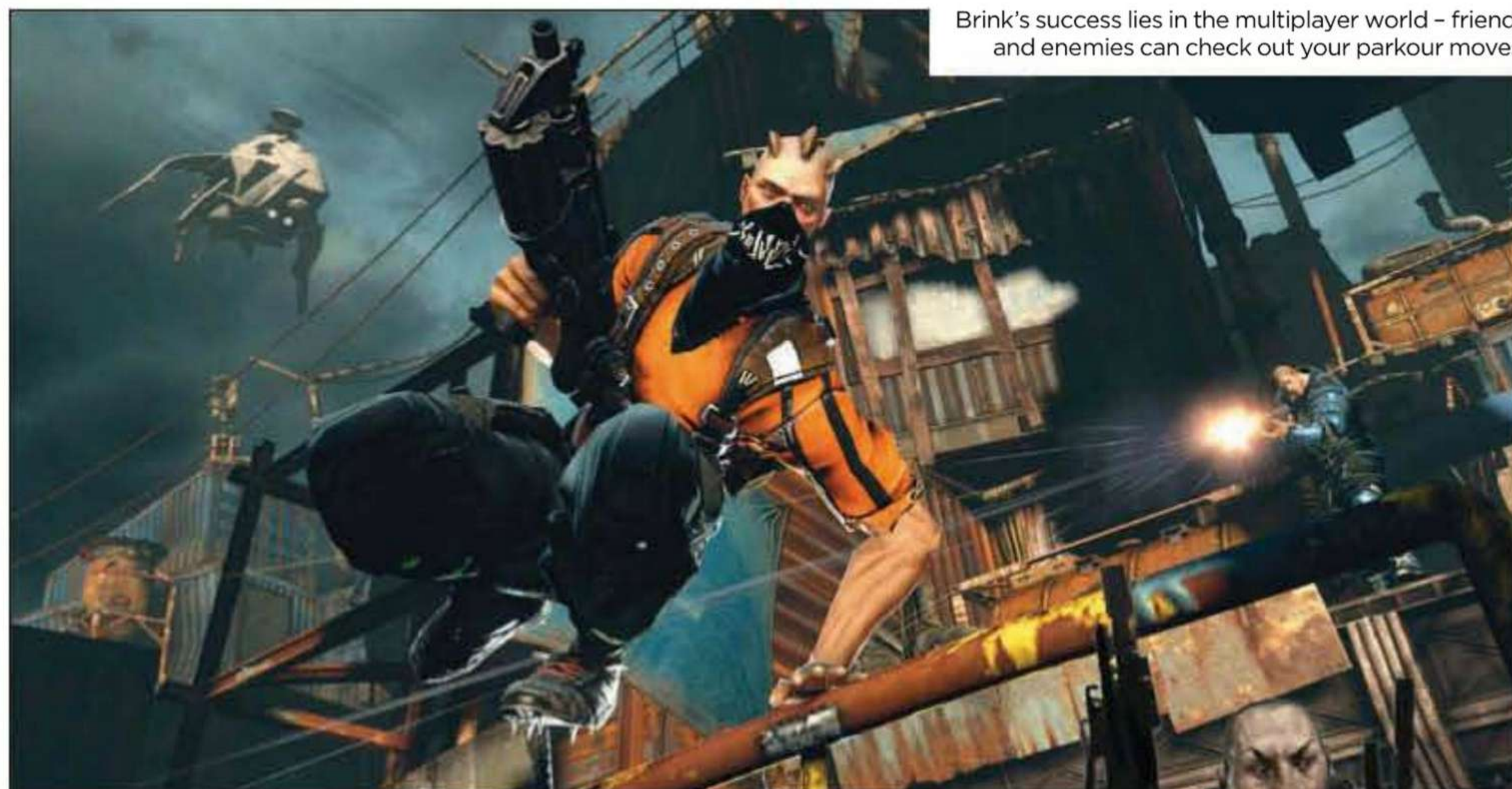
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Brink's success lies in the multiplayer world – friends and enemies can check out your parkour moves.

Brink

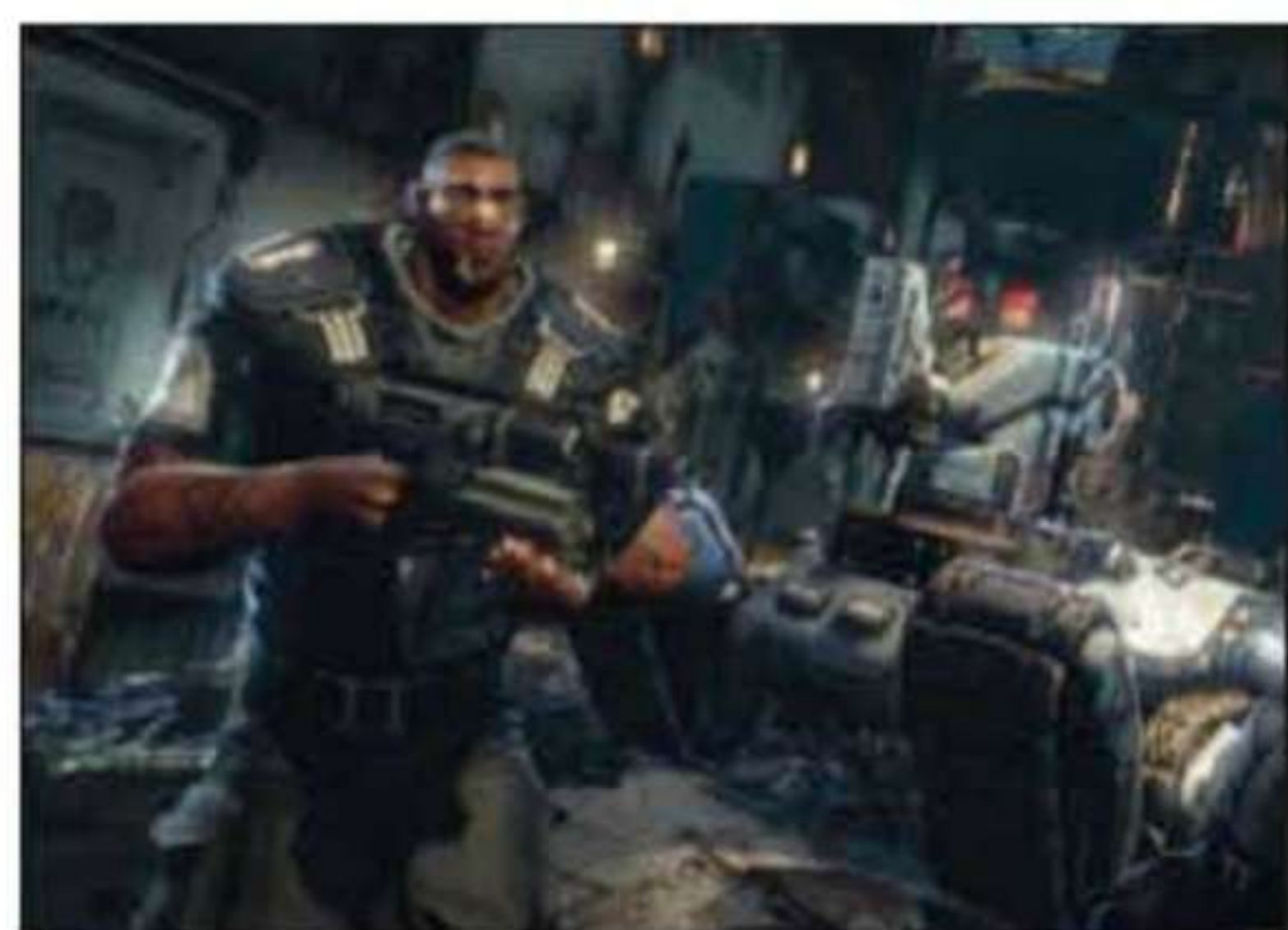
EDGE OF HEAVEN This intense futuristic shooter looks great, thanks to some neat design decisions

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360 **Publisher** Bethesda **Price** £50 **Available** Now

Splash Damage's first-person shooter features a single-player mode with barrels of content for you to sift through. However, Brink's core gameplay, longevity and, enjoyment lies in its multiplayer mode. To those gamers who don't find themselves drawn to multiplayer action, we'd say, give it a go.

Rising sea levels have forced the remnants of mankind to seek solace in a floating metropolis known as The Ark. The city's security forces are fighting to contain those citizens who wish to leave the city in search of somewhere better. It's fluffy stuff, but what sets aside Brink from the array of shooters on the market is its design – specifically, the characters that roam the world.

Art director Olivier Leonardi was handed a blank canvas when tasked



Nifty character design is one of Brink's highlights.

with the job of crafting the world of Brink and the results are nothing short of stunning. Characters are uniquely stylised and environments rich with vibrant colours thanks to

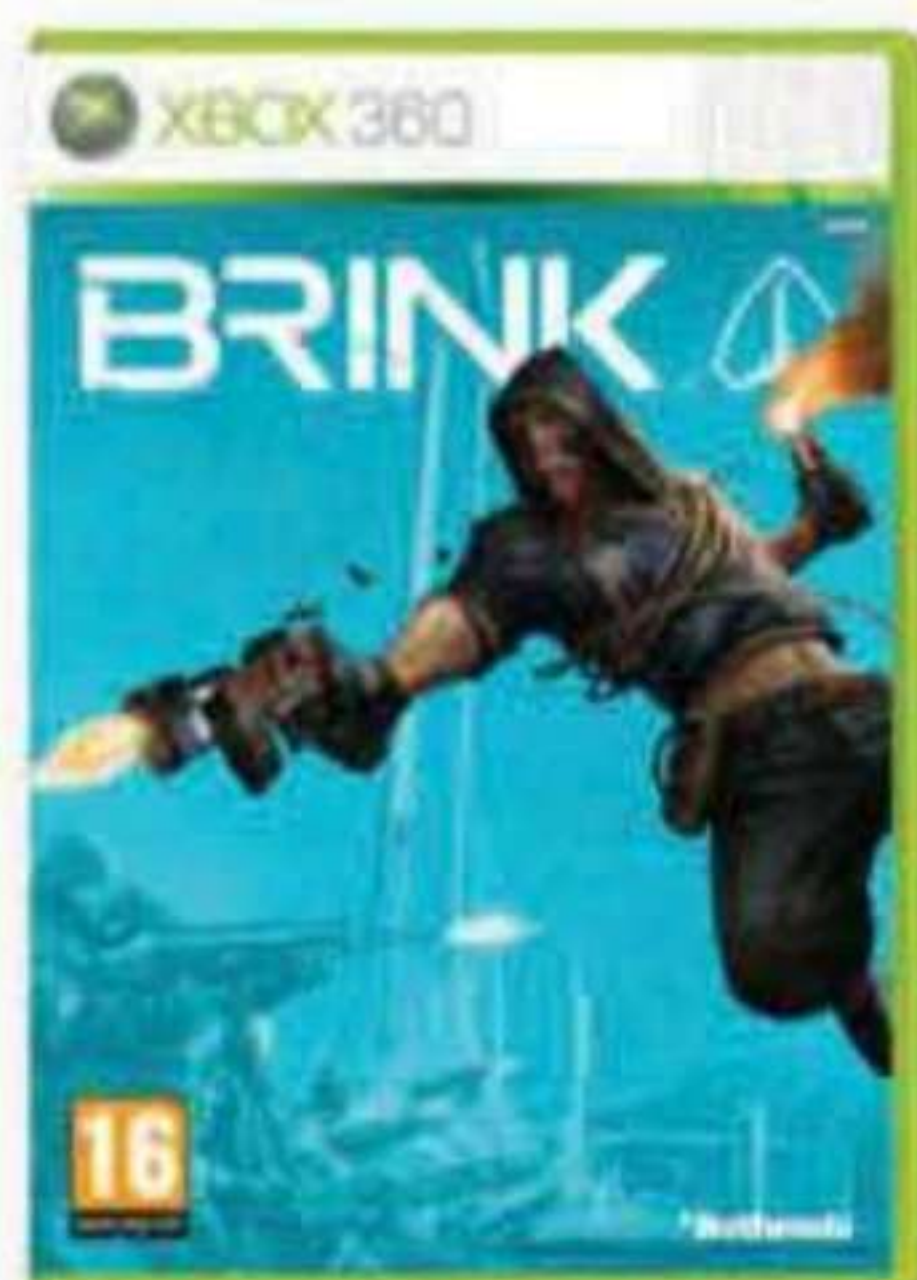
Olivier's decision to eschew the washed-out look of most of today's shooters. The game's world has been inspired by architects Santiago Calatrava and Zaha Hadid, along with progressive city designs such as Shanghai, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Olivier has also stated that the game's look and feel was inspired by the likes of

Australian sculptor Ron Mueck and Jon Foster, the American comic book artist.

Such deep-rooted attention to detail only serves to aid Brink's fun. The game's aesthetic affects how you play the game, your character choices, how you spot enemy classes on the battlefield and understanding which scenery to use for cover and flanking.

Brink is fast, furious and incredibly pleasing to play as a multiplayer experience. While you can enjoy it in single-player, we implore you to cast aside the idea of playing on your lonesome, get online and experience Splash Damage's plush floating city with fellow gamers.

RATING



ARTIST INTERVIEW

LAUREL AUSTIN

Splash Damage's senior concept artist talks about Brink's design...

What is the game's art style?

The way Olivier Leonardi, our art director, usually describes it is "exaggerated reality" or "hyperrealism". In essence, this is exaggerating the salient features of a design such that it makes it feel almost more real than real.

What or who were the team's artistic influences?

Our biggest influences on the character design were Sebastian Krueger and Phil Hale. Sebastian's work informed the design of faces – he's painted large-scale celebrity portraits and caricature and I think just about every one of us has seen his work some place or another. He has a keen eye for the exaggeration of facial features, and that was something I wanted captured in the faces of the Brink characters. Phil's paintings of extremely anatomically accurate figures with slightly pushed and warped proportions seemed a great compliment to the approach we wanted to take with the faces.

How important is a simplified silhouette in a game like Brink?

It was important to be able to distinguish another player's silhouette to identify the team he is on, but also just for visual variety. Brink is a game where, for the most part, you see players when they're relatively small on screen. So, for everyone's outfits to read clearly, we started our designs with bigger, chunkier, distinctive shapes to help players recognise things more quickly. We also wanted to make sure each set of clothing looked as different as possible from the next. For example, players might feel a bit cheated if they unlock 20 slightly different flak vests, so it was important that we put in the effort to get a good variety to make the customisation system as fun, and the results as diverse, as possible.



Laurel joined Splash Damage in 2008 and helped develop Brink. She's also a freelance sculptor and illustrator.

www.laustinar.com

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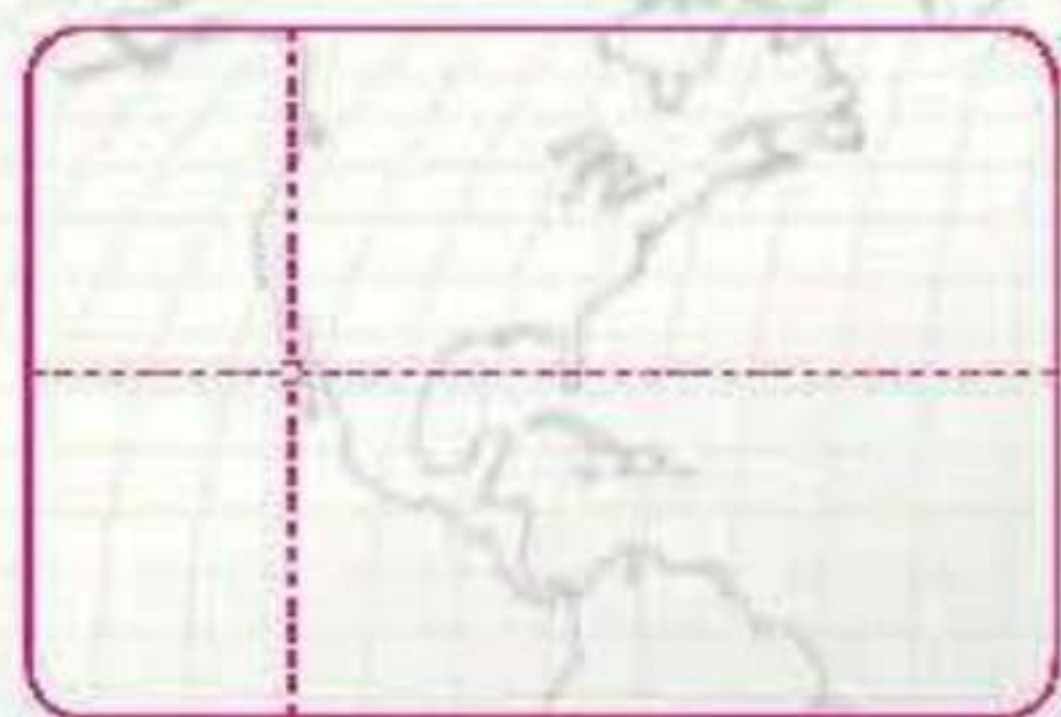


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LOCATION Los Angeles, California **RECENT PROJECT** n/a **WEB** redenginestudios.com



Steve Jung's Marine Jet Landing. As well as co-founding Red Engine Studios, Steve also teaches at Otis College of Art and Design.

Red Engine Studios

STUDY TIME Artists from the film and video game industries club together to form a teaching studio with a difference...

Finding the right art course is like buying a pair of shoes. They've got to fit. With this in mind, Red Engine Studios was set up last year "to create an educational environment unlike any other, to pioneer a more effective way to prepare students and professionals for their career... taught by real industry professionals



in a real studio setting," says director and co-founder Steve Jung.

Recognising the needs of new artists and

students, Red Engine Studios was created to offer two distinct courses. An Entertainment course targets students and industry professionals who want to brush up their concept design skills. The second course, College Preparation, is for students who want to gain entry to art college and it focuses on skill-building, and art theory and practice. It's good for developing a portfolio too. "Red Engine provides the ideal programme that facilitates the 'means' to get to the desired 'end' at the art college of the students' choice," says Steve.

Steve Jung has worked on blockbusters such as TRON Legacy (pictured below), The Avengers and Thor. Who better to pick up concept design lessons from?

An art job in video games and film can be rewarding, but it can also be very competitive and demanding. This is why Red Engine chose to offer courses taught by current industry artists, including Nathaniel West, John Park and Anthony Jones, alongside instructors steeped in art theory, such as Nathan Ota. "Since we know what's important and what qualities the major



game studios look for in someone's portfolio, we're able to provide individual guidance to our students," comments Steve's partner

in the business, co-founder and director Jung Park. Steve himself has over a decade of industry experience to call upon and takes pride in the belief that: "Red Engine's courses provide students with the experience of being in a professional art department setting so they could be better prepared for the job market."

Because the courses are run within the structure of a professional art department, with many students already working part-time or freelance



ARTIST INTERVIEW

JAMES CHEONG

A student reveals what's great about Red Engine Studios

How has studying at Red Engine Studios helped you?

I've picked up techniques and tips that enable me to think and work better, smarter and faster. The information given out isn't just written instructions, but rather something that helps me push myself further artistically.

What courses are you taking this term?

I've mostly chosen the digital-oriented classes so far, because there's only so much you can learn about digital techniques without having someone else far more knowledgeable than you show the tips and tricks that push the artwork to the next level. For this term I'm taking the entertainment portfolio prep, environment painting and environment sketching classes.

What do you want to achieve after completing the course?

My goal is to land a full-time job working as a concept artist for video games, all the while improving my abilities and knowledge of entertainment art.

What would you say to people who are thinking of attending courses at Red Engine Studios?

I'd recommend Red Engine Studios as a good alternative to other established entertainment-oriented studios in the area because the instructors are top notch while being affordable and convenient for social residents. The instructors are very skilled and there's much to be learned from their classes that you won't get in a traditional education setting.

For those who didn't go to the top schools in the business such as Art Center, Red Engine provides a relatively cheap entry to a specific and specialised skill set. Every class I've taken so far has been very friendly and casual, while pushing the students to get the most out of what's taught.



Since completing his courses at Red Engine Studios James now works as a concept artist at Aris Pictures, and also freelances.

jamescheongart.com

PROJECTS Training courses covering concept design, figure drawing and oils, environments and more

Part of Red Engine's appeal is that all the teachers work in the entertainment industry. Jung Park worked on God of War 3 for Sony Santa Monica.

in the industry and looking to freshen their skill set, the courses are up to date with the trends of the industry. Furthermore, the unique, professional atmosphere found at Red Engine can open doors. "The good relationship you build with your instructors and classmates could also lead you to an opening of a possible future job," says Jung. "I've helped students with talents get an internship many times."

However, this focus on teaching hands-on skills doesn't mean Red Engine overlooks core skills. With the belief that you need to build skills based on strong foundations, Steve says the instructors always guide students toward courses that provide solid art theory. "That's why we always let the students know the traditional



Student James Cheong created this piece while at Red Engine to bolster his portfolio.

“The good relationship you build with your instructors and classmates could also lead you to a possible future job”

courses are essential for them to become a better designer," he says.

"Red Engine is definitely a morale booster when it comes to helping artists and designers in any level of skill," says student Andy Jung, who studied at Red Engine throughout last summer to keep himself busy and gain more knowledge in areas such as vehicle and character design, and sketching for



environments. "My technical skills have improved. More importantly, my critical thinking skills, as well as problem solving in tough design situations, have improved no end," says Andy.

As an industry professional himself, Steve reflects on what he gets out of co-founding Red Engine: "It still thrills me to know that I'm being a part of someone else's journey as an artist," he says. "It's all about inspiring each other."

As well as regular lecturers from established artists such as Jung Park (whose Space Station art is pictured here), Red Engine has guest workshops from people like Justin Sweet.





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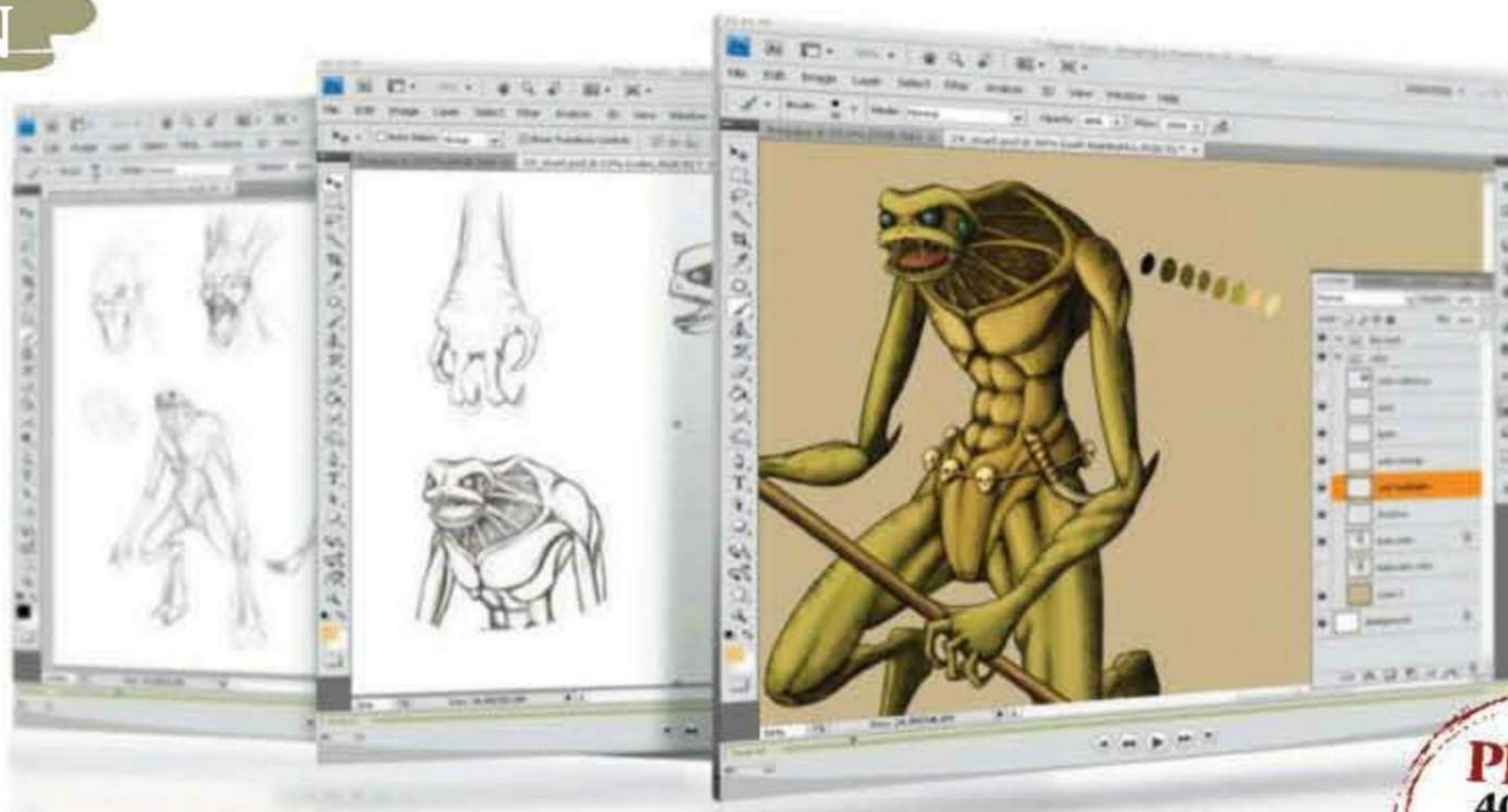
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Full pelt Brynn Metheney explains how to quickly paint patterned, tiger-like fur

Scale drawing Tips on using layers in your art come courtesy of Mark Facey



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